OFFICIAL PLAYERS GUIDE™

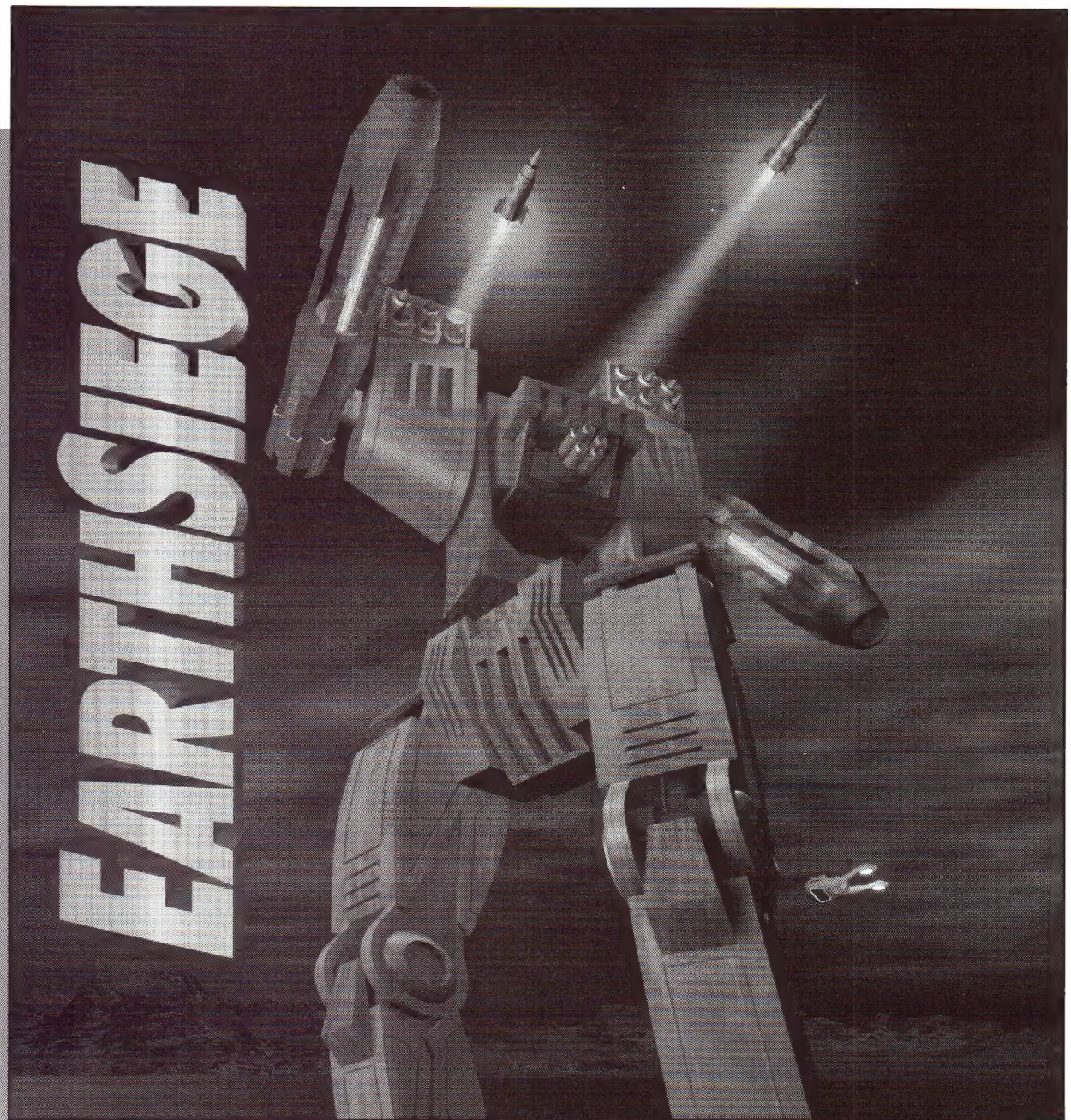
EARTHSIEGE™

by David Moskowitz

1-57280-009-7

OFFICIAL PLAYERS GUIDE

OFFICIAL PLAYERS GUIDE



DAVID S. MOSKOWITZ

Author
David S. Moskowitz

Series Editor
Peter Spear

Editor
Dan Brodnitz

Copy Editor
Bill Cassel

Vice President and Publisher
Ron Resnick

!NFOTAINMENT WORLD™ is a trademark of International Data Group

Official Players Guide™ is a trademark of !NFOTAINMENT WORLD™, Inc.

EarthSiege™ Official Players Guide™ 1995 copyright © Infotainment World, Inc. All rights reserved. Infotainment World, Inc., 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404.

No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or reproduced in any way, including but not limited to photocopy, photography, magnetic, or other record, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

The computer games and characters covered in this book (and associated trademarks and copyrights) are property of their respective companies. Infotainment World has no affiliation with these companies and the information in this book is not officially sanctioned by those companies.

EarthSiege™ and its characters are trademarks of Dynamix, Inc. All rights reserved. Trademarked or copyrighted game titles, characters, or images are employed in this book for editorial purposes only and are not intended to infringe upon the rights of the legal holders in any way.

ISBN 1-57280-009-7
Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Acknowledgments ..... **viii**

Introduction ..... **ix**

Part I: Combat Training 1

The 10 Commandments of HERC Fighting 1

People Not Parts **4**
Mix and Match **5**
Walk Softly and Carry a Big Gun **6**
Heads Up — Eyes Down **7**
Divide and Die **8**
Hard Points Are Soft Targets **9**
Frontal Assault: Frontal Lobotomy **10**
Look before You Launch **11**
Stillness for the Stillborn **13**
Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes **14**

Part II: Everything I Learned about Herculean Battle from the EarthSiege 19

Weapons 19
- The Basics 20
- Missiles 23
- Wasting Missiles 25
- The HERC as a Battering Ram 25

Defensive Equipment 25

The Missions 27
- Overview 27
- Aborting/Mission Failure 33
- When Not to Engage 35

The Service Bay 35
- Light HERCs 36
- Medium HERCs 38
- Heavy HERCs 44

General Strategies 50
- Where to Shoot 50
- Targeting 51
- Auto-Tracking 51
- Linking Weapons 52
- Maintaining Range 52

What Your HERC Can Tell You 54
- Status [F1] 54
- FlashCOMM [F2] 54
- Navigation Map [F3] 55
- Radar [F4] 55
- Target Information [F5] 55
- Missile View [F6] 56
- Command Display [F7] 56
- Detailed Damage Display [F8] 57

Learning to Play with Others 57
FlashCOMM [F2] 58
Command Display [F7] 61

Building and Maintaining Your HERCs 63
Repair 63
Building New HERCs 64

Meet the Cybrids 64
Cybrid Behavior 64
Standard Land HERCs 65
Cybrid HERCs / Closest Human Equivalent 66
Special Cybrid HERCs 70
Buildings 71
Cybrid Buildings and Their Weak Points 72

Part III: The EarthSiege 77

How to Go through the Campaigns 77

"Above All Else" 78

Alpha Sector: (One Campaign Only) 78

Delta Sector: Offensive Campaign 91

Delta Sector: Defensive Campaign 103

Bravo Sector: Offensive Campaign 114

Bravo Sector: Defensive Campaign 124

Gamma Sector: Offensive Campaign 134

Gamma Sector: Defensive Campaign 144

Gamma Sector: Critical Campaign 150

Appendix A 167

Appendix B 169

Appendix C 173

Acknowledgments

A full dedication is too pretentious for a strategy guide, but I would like to thank:

Dave Selle, who, through no fault of his own, was forced to become my contact, discuss strategy, send stuff, and deal with the dozens of little glitches with my hardware.

Tasha, who didn't eat any critical phone or power cords while I was working on this book. Good bunny.

Peter Spear, Roger Gottlieb, William Knibbe: Three fine gents who showed true class in exercising an option that Dave Selle only wished he had.

Introduction

How to Use this Book

There are two kinds of people who pick up strategy guides: the "If I wanted to read, I wouldn't be playing computer games" type, and the "I've got natural speed reading ability, no life, plenty of free time, and a hunch that every minute invested in this book will improve my playing" type.

Fast and Furious

To squeeze the greatest amount of information out of the smallest amount of reading, try the following:

Read "The 10 Commandments of HERC Fighting" but not the narrative that follows it.

Read through the weapons section in Part II.

As you play the missions, check the section entitled "The Service Bay" for the suggested HERC configuration for each kind of mission.

Before your first Strike mission, check the section on Cybrid architecture, noting the weak points of the various HERC structures.

As you play the various missions, glance at their descriptions and read the appropriate "Above All Else" section. Your starting position may change from attempt to attempt.

Read the rest of the guide at your leisure.

Digging the Details

If you've got the time, this is the way to go. Just start the book and keep reading until you hit the campaigns. Read the mission text before or after you attempt the mission. Remember, you can always reset the computer and start again in the bay if you die (make sure you do this instead of returning to the base or hitting Enter after seeing your death notification).

Part I
Combat Training

The 10 Commandments of HERC Fighting

1. People Not Parts
2. Mix and Match
3. Walk Softly and Carry a Big Gun
4. Heads Up — Eyes Down
5. Divide and Die
6. Hard Points Are Soft Targets
7. Frontal Assault: Frontal Lobotomy
8. Look before You Launch
9. Stillness for the Stillborn
10. Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes

2498 — two years after the Cybrid expulsion from Earth

Quick glances around the room confirmed that everyone was thinking the same thing: "This is combat training."

In front of 30 students stood a tall, white-haired man of about 55. You could ignore the limp, but you couldn't avoid his obviously artificial eyes. It wasn't clear what range of colors they perceived; circuitry limitations constrained their display to variations of one color at any given time.

The eyes, as horrifying as they were at first, gave a certain credibility to the instructor and the 10 seemingly silly phrases that appeared on the screen beside him.

As they recited the phrases, the students began to realize just how rare and valuable artificial eyes were. How he had earned them was unimportant. Their presence was enough. The Cybrids had first killed the handicapped in an effort to understand mankind's deadliest advantage — the ability to adapt to hardship. One question was unavoidable: How had he survived?

"Now," he announced, "my name is Jeremiah Malloy, retired Colonel Jeremiah Malloy. As much as I dislike it, I will learn your names, but once you walk out of my life, I will never know what happens to you.

"The tapes I get back don't include the pilots' identities. I don't know who lives and which of my former students gets turned to slag. This is good. It keeps me focused.

"Learn from this. Focusing will bring you strength. You are all orphans and romantically unattached. Nobody dies a glorious death to impress anyone back home, and nobody holds back, figuring they have more at stake than their comrades."

The class looked at one another, trying to adjust to the thought that they were the only people who would mean anything until the war was over. They shivered, wondering how things were before the Cybrids had been kicked off the Earth.

"You will all have a chance to get to know each other later on," the Colonel continued, "but right now, it's time to learn the 10 Commandments: When I point at one, I want you to read the Commandment aloud and together. Then I will explain it."

Even those who hadn't developed bad attitudes growing up after the holocaust felt they should scoff at this seemingly childish order.

Malloy smiled back at the smirking faces. "If just one of you fails to cooperate, not only will I throw all of you out of here, but you will never learn how I lost my eyes. Now..."

It took three seconds for this class of loners to realize that the only choice they had was to unify. They read loudly and together.

"People Not Parts."

"Before the Cybrids," Malloy continued, "recruits like you would probably be referred to as maggots. But the Cybrids aren't worried about the maggots yet, they just want the humans. You're fighting these tin cans for our collective fate.

"The battlefield has more seductive charms than the bedroom," he explained. "We need every ounce of scrap and every fallen weapon system that we can get, but we need to live even more.

"Reducing one of those tin can butchers to slag may be the most satisfying experience you'll ever have. But the Cybrids know that, and their wounded walkers can easily lead you away from a buddy in trouble or the mission at hand. High Command determines mission specifications. These missions are the key to our future. Determining if these instructions are more important than the lives of your comrades is the toughest decision you will ever make."

Everyone was silent, awaiting his advice, but the retired Colonel only paused before moving his hand down to the second point.

"Mix and Match."

The class had already become tighter in its recitation.

"Terrain, atmosphere, mission objectives, and weapons stock influence how you equip your HERC, but never forget this principle."

Holograms of Roadrunner and Colossus HERCs suddenly appeared to the left and right of Malloy.

"You need energy for shields and motion. If every weapon must have its batteries juiced, you are going to have a very short, very aggressive career, or you will become an expert in HERC ballet, dancing around while waiting for your weapons to recharge.

"ATC bullets may be old-fashioned, but they don't require much energy to fire. They don't even require that much of your HERC is working.

"Missiles deliver a nasty punch but often require some working circuitry to be really effective. They're wasted against an enemy's fully charged shields. More importantly, you must always try to select the right missile for the mission, or else you'll waste hard points. But even the theoretically correct choice might prove useless. Always be prepared for this possibility."

Information will be forthcoming, the class hoped, watching Malloy gesture to the next Commandment.

"Walk Softly and Carry a Big Gun."

"I almost called this one 'Ignorance is bliss,'" Malloy said, revealing that the list was entirely his creation.

"The simple fact is that, if you don't know about them, they probably don't know about you. Unless the type of mission you're on requires otherwise, keep your scanners passive and any countermeasures off for as long as possible. Even if you're assigned to simply walk around the countryside and pick a fight with any HERC without a human pilot, you still need every advantage you can get."

"Well, I've explained the point of silent running," the commander said drolly, "I trust I don't have to explain the 'big gun?'"

Nobody was sure whether they should answer, and if so, how. Several pairs of lips tentatively whispered "no" and most heads were moving — either nodding to acknowledge the humor or shaking side to side to answer the question.

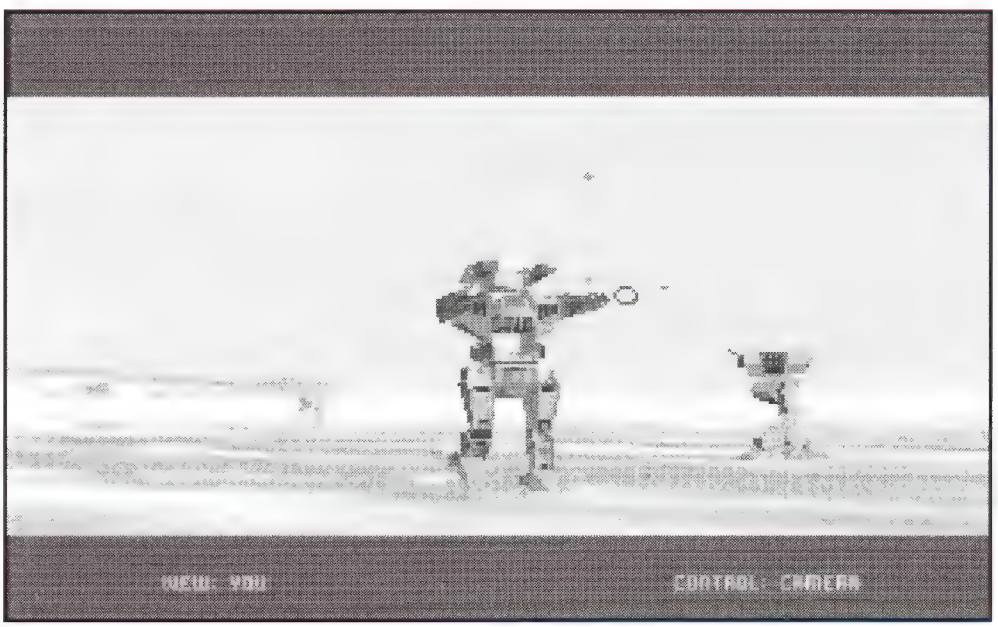
This indecision ended with a tired gesture from the instructor.

"Heads Up — Eyes Down."

"The worst thing about fighting Buzzards is that, unless you're using guided missiles, you have to tilt your HERC upward — obscuring your view of what's going on at ground level. Otherwise, it's like chasing butterflies in the forest — soon you'll hit a bear or a tree."

Malloy paused, hoping this crew wasn't so green that they wouldn't understand. They fidgeted quietly, waiting for more. He continued.

"Anyhow, I don't care what's going on around you, make sure your viewscreen is showing the radar or at least the topical map. Now, everyone — "

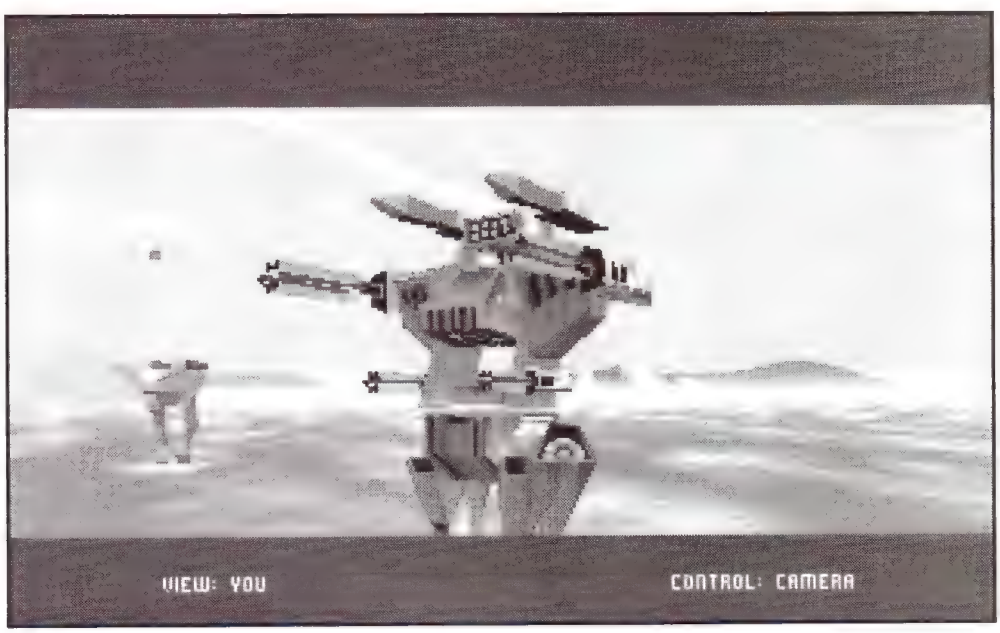


"Divide and Die."

"This was originally 'united we stand, divided we die,'" Malloy explained. "It's quite simple. The Cybrids still outnumber us. If your squad cannot coordinate its attacks, you all stand a much greater chance of ending up on a Cybrid dissection table."

The class found themselves staring at Malloy's artificial parts.

"No, that's not what happened to me," he barked, pointing to the next item down.



"Hard Points Are Soft Targets."

"What would you rather lose," Malloy asked, a hint of malice in his smile, "two fingers or a leg — or maybe a liver, or your heart?"

Several students looked down at their hands, trying to figure out how many fingers they'd lose to keep a leg.

"What if you were stuck in the middle of a battlefield," the instructor barked impatiently, "without a HERC?"

The surprised students stopped counting fingers.

"Good. Legs, waist, and cockpit must remain intact to guarantee the safety of the pilot within. Losing a hard point is like losing a finger — it makes firing weapons more difficult, but still leaves you alive."

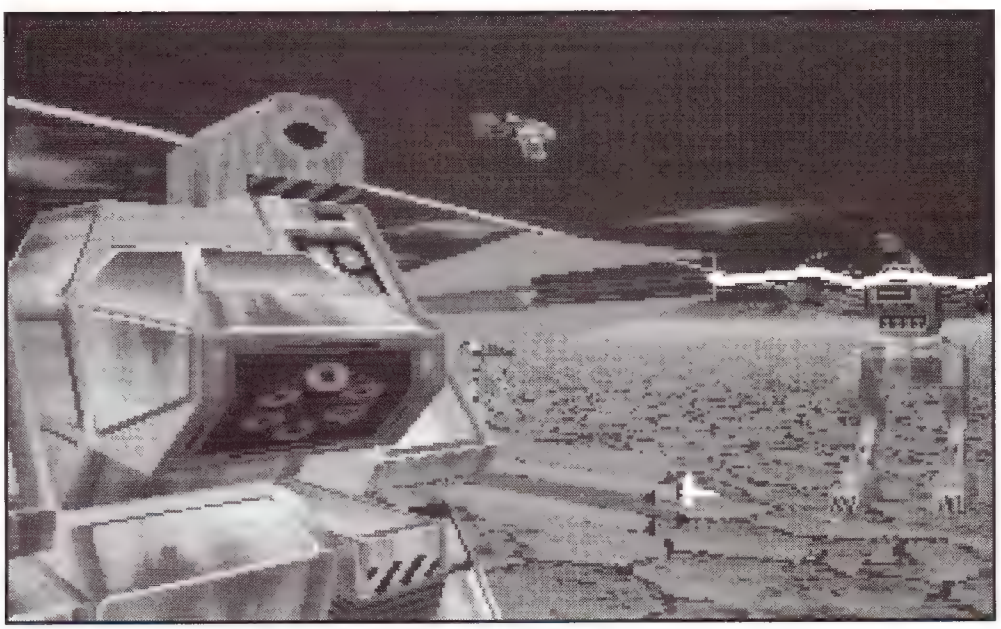
Malloy paused again, hoping someone would come to a proper conclusion, and knowing no one would speak it no matter how sure they were.

"But this isn't about you. It's about the enemy. After protecting the essentials, there's only so much armor that can be slapped on a hard point before the entire HERC's performance starts to falter due to the added weight. If you have the enemy in a good position where it will take a few seconds to mount a counterattack, try to pluck off a few weapons — at first, go for the weapons themselves. Try to master hitting the hard points when you become more experienced.

"Frontal Assault: Frontal Lobotomy."

"The latter is the only excuse for executing the former." For the first time since he had started speaking, Malloy began to pace, carrying his limp left leg with surprising grace. "You have nothing to gain from attacking a HERC face-to-face unless it's much smaller than you. Even when you have the advantage you'll always do better attacking from the side or the rear."

The lecturer paused, seemingly unconvinced by his own words. With an unacceptably quick motion, he slapped his right fist against the wall. His voice exploded into a scream. "It's like shouting 'kill me' at the world. You expose your waist and your cockpit for no reason! No questions allowed. Next!"



"Look before You Launch."

"I know the fantasy, I've seen the vids, and I'm a hell of a lot older than all of you." Malloy had stopped pacing and now stared through the class with his haunting artificial eyes. Slow sweeping movements with his arms seemed to paint the scene in everyone's mind.

"It's been a long battle and the rest of your squad is out of action. The tin cans have taken a beating as well, though one still lumbers on, its target: a hospital, orphanage, secret weapons lab, HQ, whatever — play out your fantasy.

"Your own HERC is a wreck, unable to move or generate enough energy for its headlights, let alone the lasers. You're in even worse shape, blood covering the controls and the screens. You wonder how many broken bones you have, but at this point, you can't count that high."

Malloy paused just long enough to startle everyone when he resumed his narration. His smile became broader.

"But wait! There's one missile left, so, summoning all the strength you have left, and what passes for a good finger, you press the launch button. The one eye that's not swollen shut remains open just long enough to see the flash in the distance. The Cybrid has gone down, mankind is saved, and the next time you open your eyes, you're being handed a tropical beverage with a decorative umbrella."

Nervous smiles flooded the classroom, everyone already prepared for whatever outburst their instructor had planned.

"Four problems with this story:

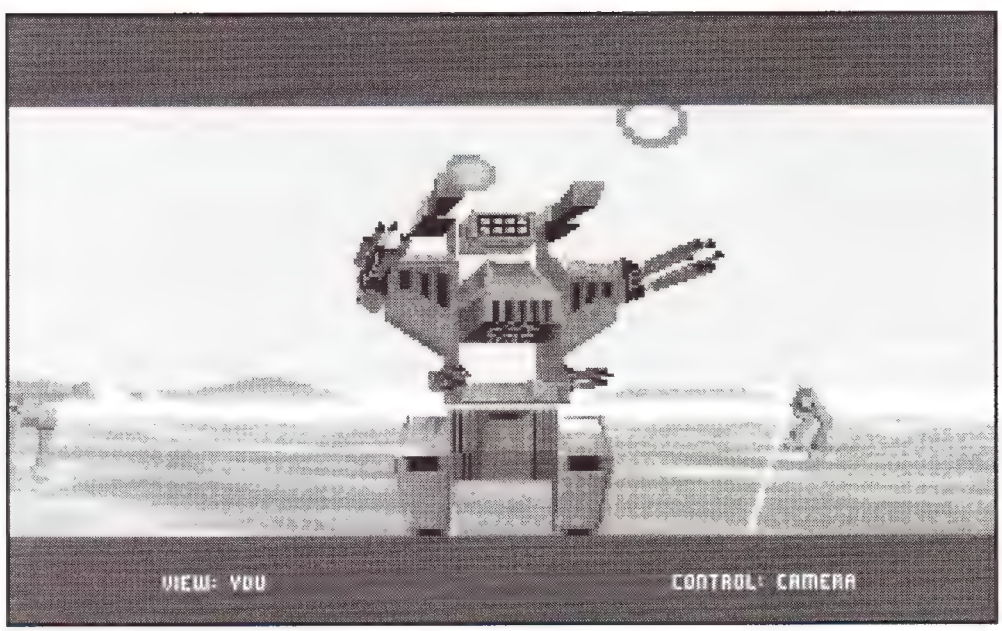
"One, if you manage to learn something, you won't have to take this kind of beating. Two, if your HERC takes enough damage for you to be injured, you are soup, which is just as well because, three, you can't get a decorative umbrella in any army hospital."

There was a long pause while the smirks turned more nervous than amused.

"Most importantly, four, missiles don't work that way. If they don't require active scanning, something which will attract every tin can within range, you have to steer them yourself or, at the very least, select the target. You're all too young for the word "missile" to conjure images of nuclear warheads, but in case that's what you're thinking — stop. A good set of shields can defeat any of them. Depending on how you choose and use them, missiles can be the most important weapon in your arsenal, or they can be a complete waste of tonnage. Now..."

"Stillness for the Stillborn."

"As far as the war efforts concerned, if you don't keep moving, you might as well have never been born. It's just that simple. Now..."



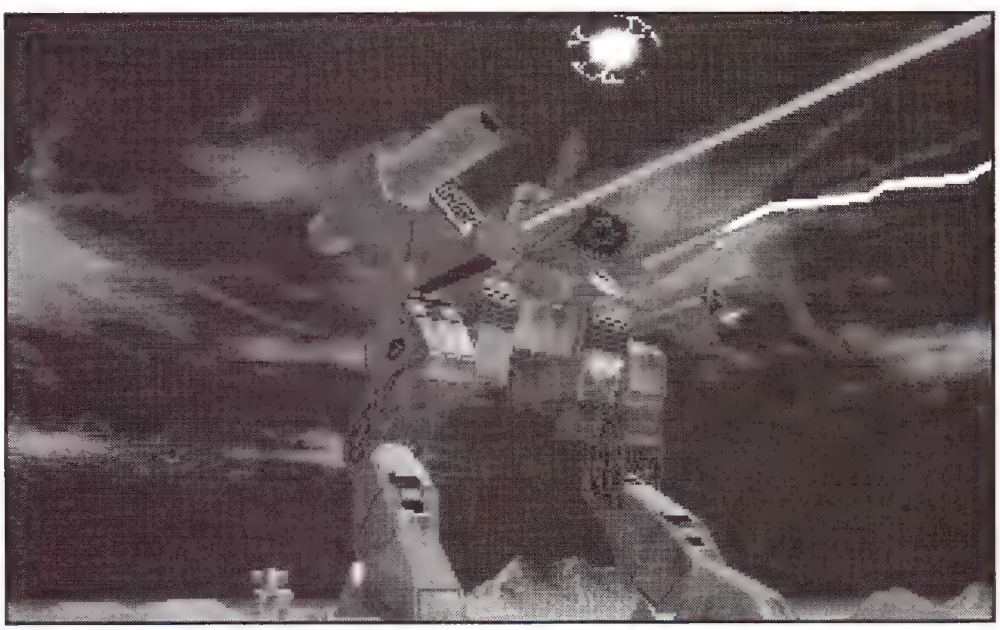
"Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes."

"...knees and toes," added a few quiet voices from around the room.

"That's it!" the instructor exclaimed, his flying fingers pointing toward everyone who even mouthed the final "knees and toes."

"That's programming," he continued, "of something even older than I am. Even as chaotic as your childhoods were, the culture still managed to instill this little game in your head. Soon you should be able to recite the 10 Commandments as instinctively.

"Now, the explanation." Malloy placed his hands upon his head. "Most often, the most powerful weapon is placed on top — and



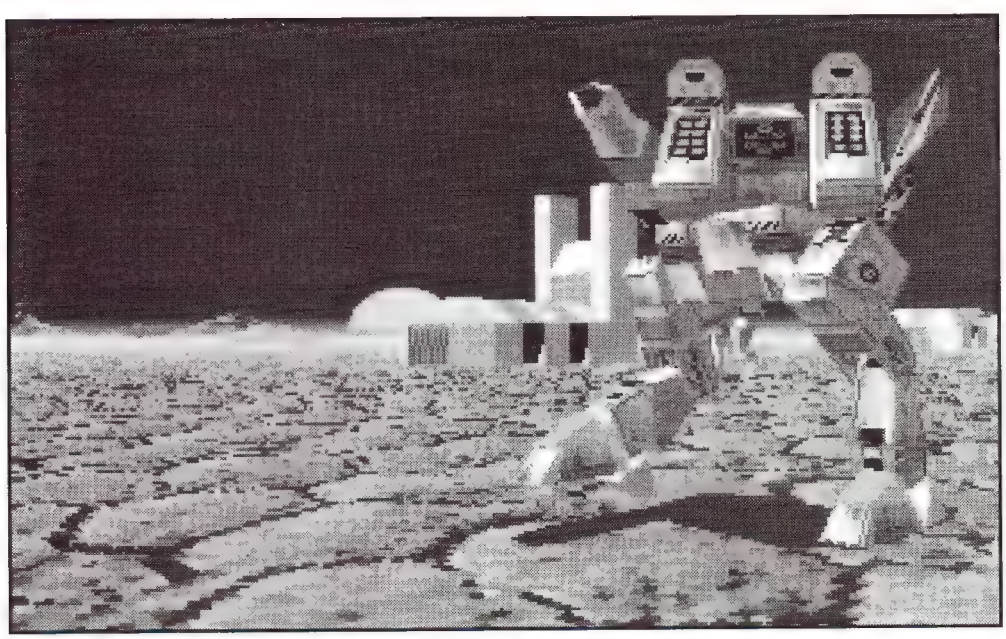
even if it's not a weapon, getting rid of an ECM is a fine way to start a battle. Begin your attack by focusing on your enemy's head."

"Next come the shoulder-mounted weapons." His hands dropped down to his shoulders. "Take these out left and right and you'll finish off most, but not all, of the HERC's weapons."

"Then, if and only if it's safe, take out the knees or feet, depending on your own HERC's condition. This will save as much as possible for the scrap boys."

Malloy seemed to enjoy the stretch of touching his toes and let himself hang there for a moment before straightening himself.

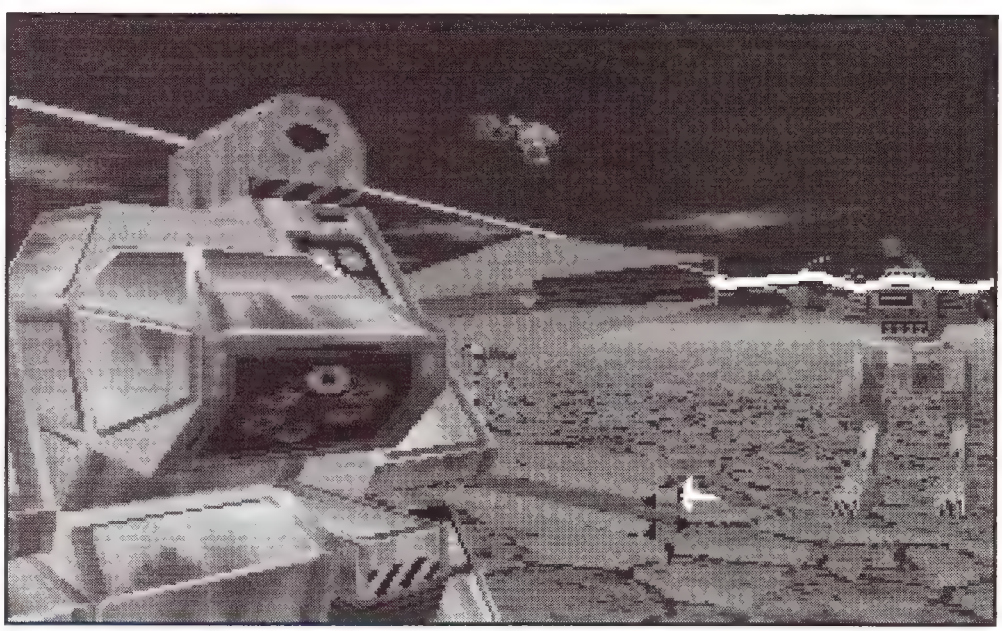
"But remember, looking for parts is always secondary to your mission and your teammates. If you need a quick kill, just take out the waist."

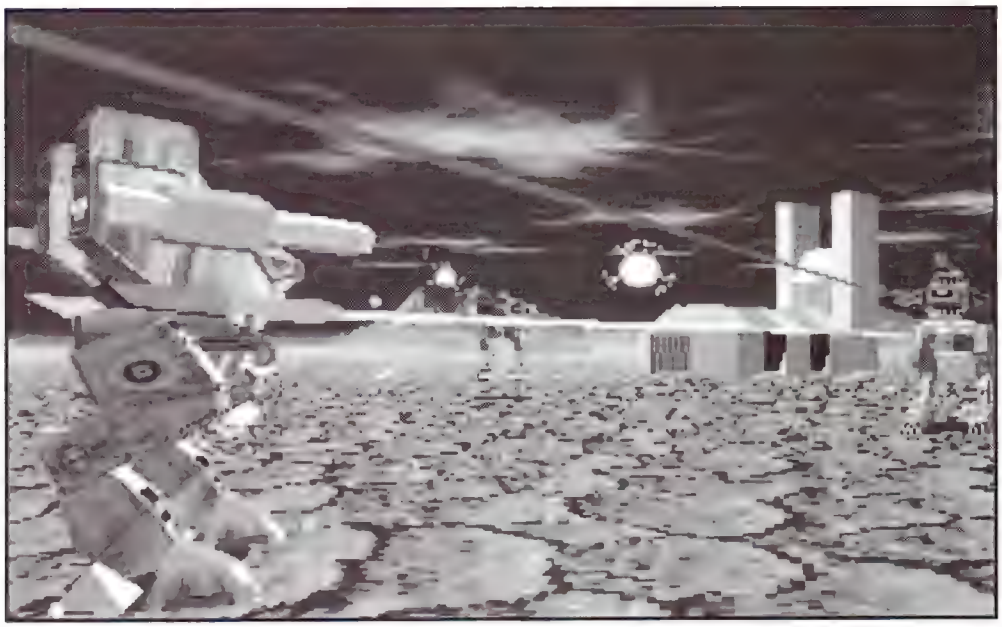


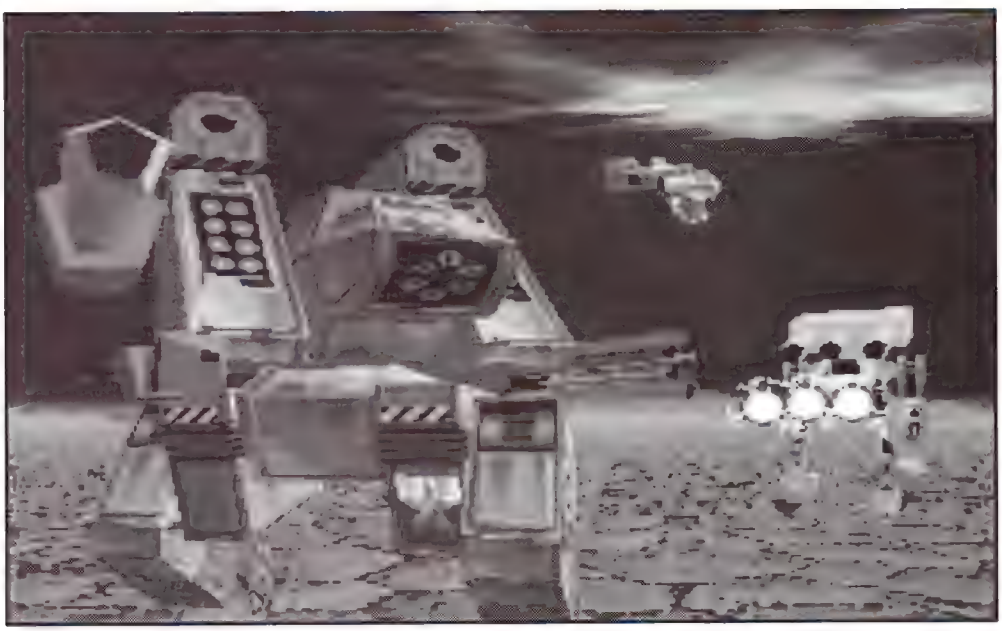
The retired Colonel leaned back against the wall. "That's it. I know you have all sorts of moving in to do. I don't care. Memorize these Commandments and their application by 10 a.m. tomorrow or don't bother unpacking.

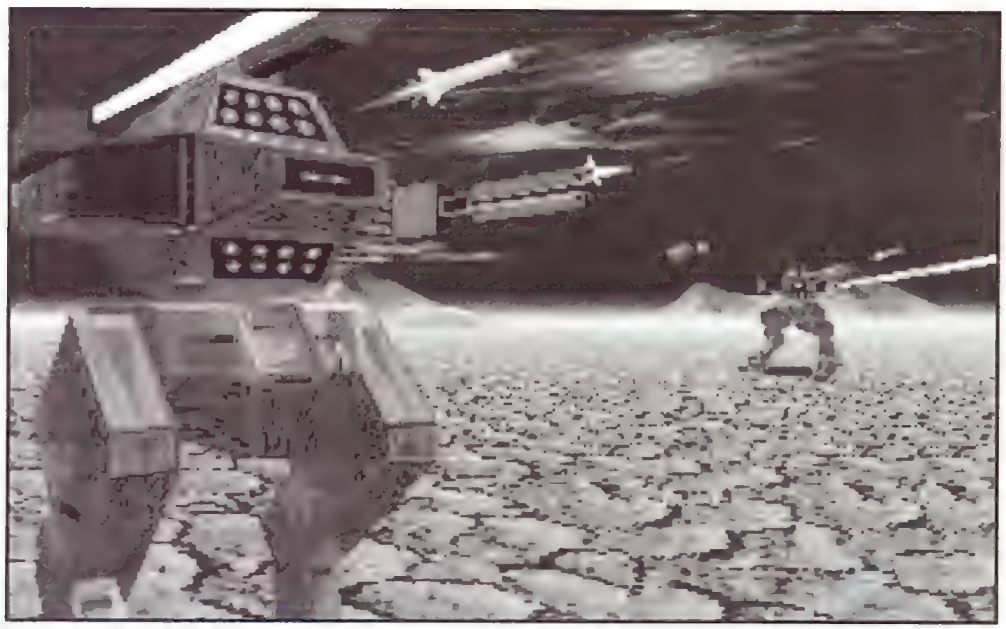
"In addition to your basic manual, you will have my own book as a reference point for the lectures. It's got everything you need except experience. That comes from reading the collected accounts of the Earth war and from your own sweat and blood. Leave, now."

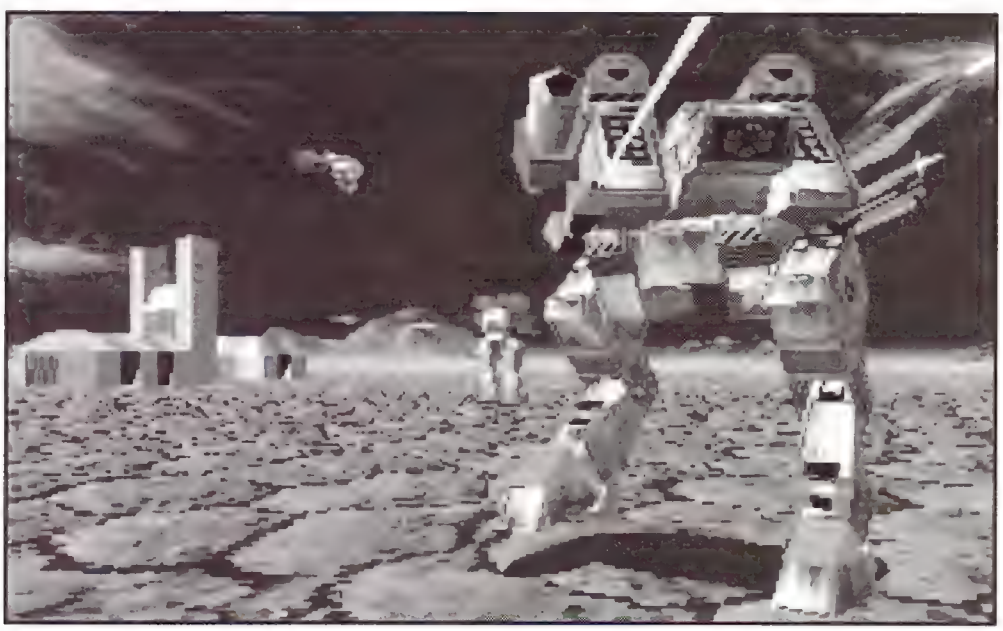
His smile vanished, and within seconds so did the class.











Part II

Everything I Learned about Herculean Battle from the EarthSiege

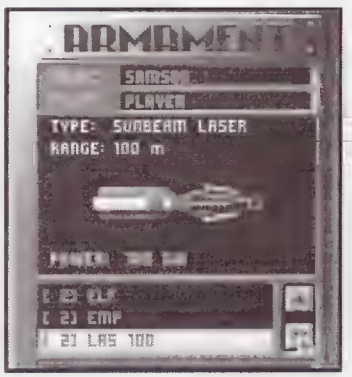
by Jeremiah Malloy

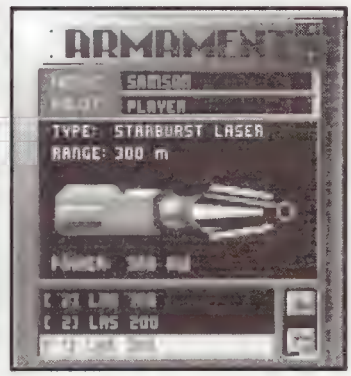
Weapons

Before you learn more about your HERCs, the Cybrids, or anything about battle and the types of missions, it's critical to become comfortable with all the armaments you'll be using as well as all those you'll be facing.

The Basics

Lasers

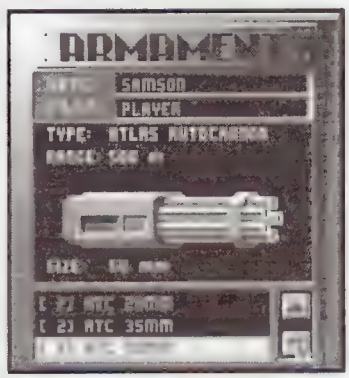




These are your basic energy weapons, available in three sizes: 100gw, 200gw, and the Roadrunner's best friend, the 300gw. The most important thing to remember about lasers is not to forget them, especially when you have ready access to bigger toys such as EMPs, PBWs, and ELFs.

If the lasers are your main energy drain, go ahead and link them. Otherwise, keep them separate or else you'll find you don't have the energy for anything by the end of your first major skirmish — something you don't want to happen on the longer missions.

Automatic Cannons (ATCs)



Just one of the smallest 20mm rounds from these can fragment a watermelon. Unfortunately, you're fighting tin nightmares that even James Cameron would be too frightened to film. Shields and armor are relatively effective against ATCs, but

a steady barrage can be quite damaging after a short while.

Most importantly, these are your truly idiot-proof weapons. While you have bullets and a working gun, your attack is relentless, regardless of energy. For those of you who delight in energy hogs, these work great with an EMP or at least a big laser — like the 300gw.

Electromagnetic Pulse Cannons (EMPs)

There's no such thing as subtlety in battle, but EMPs come close to it. Besides sending a painful shock of electricity up your rear, they tend to short-circuit shield generators. Generally, only the shield you hit will be affected (i.e., forward or reverse); however, if you hit the side of a HERC, there's a good chance that the EMP will affect both.

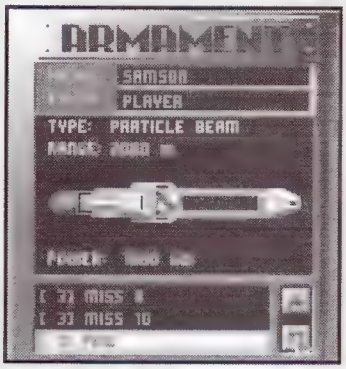
Besides having a voracious appetite for energy, for some reason that you should have learned in physics, they're slow, real slow.

Whether or not you should place EMPs in chains depends entirely on the mission. If you plan for a lot of close combat, such as in a strike on an enemy base, keep them in the chain. For missions where you find the enemy more scattered and first encountered at greater distances, keep EMPs out of chains. With the recharge time and the varieties of Cybrid combat maneuvers, odds are you'll never launch one at just the right moment.

Three basic rules apply to EMPs:

1. Spend as much time as possible in the single mission simulators perfecting your timing.
2. Keep your missiles off the chain. That way you will be sure to fire them only after you've scored a hit with the EMP and really want to use your missiles.
3. When choosing other weapons, remember the Second Commandment — Mix and Match.

Particle Beam Weapons (PBWs)



Putting these on your HERC is like getting married — a serious commitment. They suck up a lot of energy, and to get anything at all worthwhile out of them, be prepared for a lot of close contact.

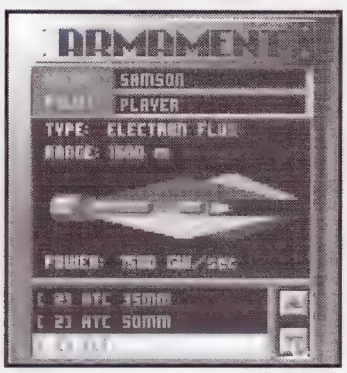
Deciding to carry PBWs also affects your other critical decisions — especially HERC selection. Close-range weapons require the following:

1. Your HERC has the armor to fight close — occasionally even face-to-face, and
2. your HERC can keep up with any Cybrid opponent.

This means that, for missions where the enemies are going to be close together or focused in on a specific target (e.g. Scramble, Search and Rescue), you should take the heavier HERC armor. Otherwise, get as much speed and maneuverability as you can.

As with EMPs, it's a good plan to couple these with plenty of weapons that don't consume much energy, like ATCs and missiles.

Electron Flux Weapons (ELFs)



Originally thought impossible to make, an ELF takes pure energy and snaps it like a barbed whip, cutting through shields and hard points while holding on to the main body.

Due to their long firing time and even longer recharge time, it is necessary to ensure that each ELF firing is a kill — no matter what the target is. Therefore, only use them at close range, and once they start firing, keep firing until the target is completely disarmed or destroyed.

Since an ELF generally snaps off external weapons first, never forget that anything except an Arachnitron may be carrying a full rack of missiles in its gut, ready to fire no matter what shape the rest of the HERC is in.

At the same time, keep in mind that the ELF might ignite any missiles it hits; don't get too close if a serious explosion is possible.

It's easy to forget about ELFs until they start firing again, but if you can ever choose your target, always go for the HERC that's in better shape — especially if its shields are operational.

Missiles

Missle racks comes in sizes of six, eight, and ten. Use the biggest one that can fit on your hard point.

There are four different types of missiles:

Semi-Active Radar Homing (SARH) Missiles

This one's for experts since you have to maintain radar lock and keep sight of the target until the missile strikes. The payoff for such a low-tech toy is an extra 10% damage over the ARH.

Active Radar Homing (ARH) Missiles

You still need a radar lock to fire one of these, but once it's left the HERC, you can concentrate on the rest of the battle. Forget the 10% SARH damage bonus — take these.

Anti-Radiation (ARM) Missiles

Not quite as versatile as the EOs, nor as difficult to use, ARMs are the missiles of choice when the need for stealth precludes the use of SARH and ARH.

Since ARMs only hunt down targets with active radar, it's important to be especially careful about using active radar when the briefing says Cybrids will most likely be using ARMs. Similarly, since most buildings do not possess radar, make sure to keep these out of your chains — especially on Strike missions.

ARMs are ideal, however, for Recon missions. When you first encounter the "guard" Cybrid on the way to the target, take a shot at it with your ATCs and energy weapons. As soon as it's hit, it will switch from passive to active radar. Now, empty your entire array into the Cybrid. Ideally, you should be able to take care of the pest long before you reach the Cybrid base. This also means you'll be able to concentrate more on Buzzards and on targeting the appropriate buildings.

Electro-Optical (EO) Missiles

In terms of range, radar requirements, and explosive power, these are certainly the best missiles — as long as you have the time and skill to use them properly. Even if you're the most coordinated pilot in all of the human resistance, nothing will make up for the time lost from launch to impact — that's time lost from access to your radar, teammates, status reports, and everything but your target. Aiming your HERC straight at the target, firing, and forgetting will hardly ever work except against the larger buildings.

Because successful use of EO missiles requires so much attention from HERC pilots, try to meet as many of these conditions as possible before launching:

1. The target's shields are down.
2. The target is big and relatively stationary — buildings are best, Buzzards and Arachnitrons are the worst.

3. Your position relative to allies, Cybrids, and terrain features is favorable enough that you won't return from the missile viewscreen to find yourself trapped or disabled.

Wasting Missles

There are times when you don't prepare well enough, or you panic, or something sneaks up on you (after all, the beauty of ARMs and EOs is that your radar can always be on "passive"), and you end up wasting missiles. In most cases, this does mean you are an idiot, but not so much of one that the resistance wants to lose you or your HERC.

The HERC as a Battering Ram

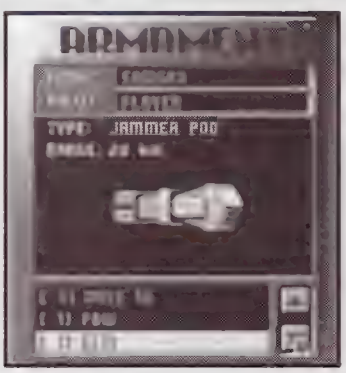
Even the weakest of HERCs could easily take out an elephant simply by stepping on it. Don't expect anything spectacular, but a collision will potentially inflict damage to both HERCs and stop any forward or backward movement.

Since both HERCs might take damage, you shouldn't try this against a bigger HERC. Be sure to have the appropriate shield (normally front) as strong as possible.

Regardless of damage, there is no chance that you'll be able to "push" another HERC over. This is discussed in detail later on.

Defensive Equipment

Electronic Counter Measures Pod (ECM)



Technically not a weapon, they use no ammo, use minimal energy, and remain on or off as long as you want (provided someone doesn't hit your engine — in which case maintaining power to your ECM will probably be the least of your problems.)

Since ECMs only affect missiles aimed at your HERC, they will not interfere with

your own missile attack nor your comrades'. This ease of use does not mean you should have them on all of the time. Unless specifically instructed by the mission, keep them off until you are spotted by Cybrid HERCs. If you defeat the Cybrids or lose them, turn off the ECM until you need it again.

Shields

It might seem that energy allocation to the shields is simply a matter of determining where the Cybrids are. If you're heading into them, put all power to the forward shield, and if they're only behind you, transfer all power to your rear shield.

Not quite.

Shields are composed of pure electromagnetic energy, but that doesn't mean that one can be instantaneously recharged or strengthened at the expense of another. This takes several seconds — often too many to adequately compensate for the constantly changing defensive needs of your HERC. Cybrid groups that split up upon contact can quickly establish a multi-sided attack.

If you're significantly faster than your opponents, this won't happen quite as often, but enemy Buzzards are always able to force the issue, attacking from the opposite direction of the ground units charging toward you. No matter how big and intact your HERC may be at the time, it's truly frightening what a missile or two can do to an unguarded back leg.

Armor

Unlike the shields, armor protection is a constant until blown off, and then the armor does not regenerate. Similarly, it is not vulnerable to energy mismanagement or EMPs.

Keep in mind that all HERCs are more heavily armored on the front than on the rear. This makes it even more important that you always have at least some juice going into rear shields, no matter how heavy the frontal assault may be.

The Missions

Overview

Now you know what's available to your HERC. Before you pick which HERC you want to use, you'll need to find out what types of missions you'll be taking. Each has its own specific goals and duration.

Scramble

Protect the base at all costs.

Blasting away the Cybrids is the obvious goal, but if you can't disarm or cripple them, do your best to distract them. As soon as you're outside, order everyone in the squad to switch to active radar immediately and spread out. Finding and engaging the enemy as soon as possible is paramount. The base has the means to take out the enemy without your help, but that will mean sacrificing several buildings.

If your HERC is acting more as a moving shield than as an effective fighting force, hold on the best you can and scream for help. It will arrive eventually because, more than in any other mission, saving your own hide also accomplishes the main goal.

Search and Rescue

Most Cybrid experts swear that only cold logic guides their genocide, but anyone who's been a part of one of these missions swears that they have a malicious streak, possibly

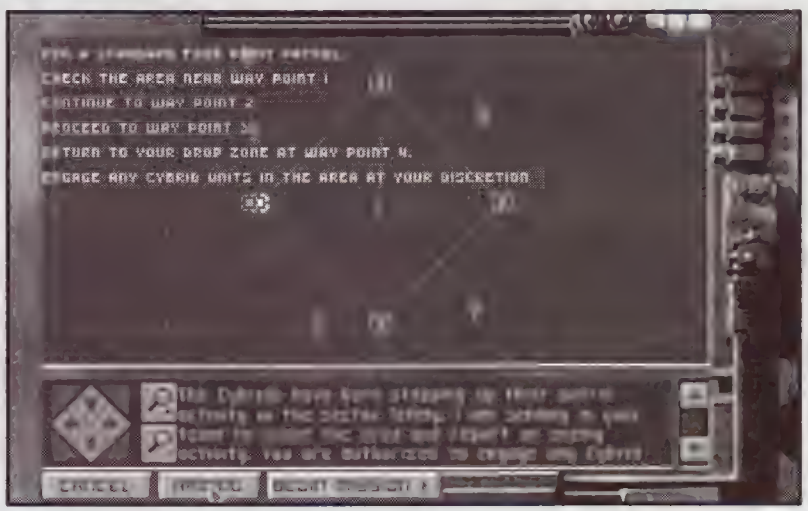
FROM YOUR DROP ZONE, BEGIN A SEARCH PATTERN.
SEARCH THE WAY POINTS TO LOCATE OUR PATROL.
STOP YOUR SWEEP WHEN YOU FIND SURVIVORS.
PROTECT SURVIVORS FROM ENEMY ATTACK.

implanted as a misguided attempt from a Prometheus programmer to give the machines a complete emotional pallette.

Regardless, when a human HERC goes down, the Cybrids will often put their entire campaign on hold just to kill the trapped survivor. If one of your comrades is attacked in this manner, the only Cybrids that will bother to attack you independently are the Buzzards, so keep the rear shields on a minimal level and charge right in.

Any Cybrid with its weapons gone is not a concern. Let them run around all they want and don't think about polishing them off until everything else with weapons is rendered harmless.

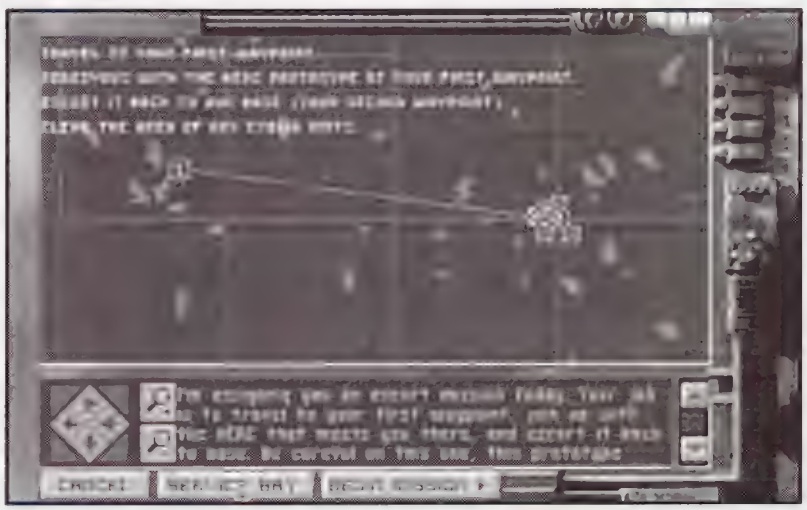
Scout and Patrol


CHECK THE AREA NEAR WAY POINT 1
CONTINUE TO WAY POINT 2
PROCEED TO WAY POINT 3
RETURN TO YOUR DROP ZONE AT WAY POINT 4.
ENGAGE ANY CYBRID UNITS IN THE AREA AT YOUR DISCRETION

These are your most basic missions. Go to the waypoints and pick your opponents carefully. No matter how cranky your CO gets when you don't make it to your assigned waypoints, do

not take any unnecessary risks. The only difference between the two mission types is that Scout missions take place in enemy territory, and require even more caution. If you get disabled or suddenly abort, it will be much tougher for your comrades to get you out.

Escort



These are easily the most nerve-wracking missions. First of all, failure will result in some major hindrance — like delaying the availability of a new HERC in building options. This means you should only abort if death seems unavoidable.

Secondly, you're responsible for the safety of a HERC that's neither combat ready nor responsive to your orders. At least with Search and Rescue missions the crippled HERC isn't constantly moving. In this level, whatever you're escorting will just keep walking toward the proper waypoints no matter what's going on. Breaking off a skirmish with a Cyrbid HERC is unpleasant but, at times, unavoidable.

There are two rules to keep in mind during Escort missions:

1. Always go for the quick kill. No matter how much salvage you can collect, humanity will lose the war if we fall too far behind the Cybrids technologically.
2. Against more heavily armored HERCs, if the quick kill isn't possible, start taking out the weapons. Remember, your

primary job is to ensure the safety of your charge; blowing up tin cans is strictly secondary.

Recon

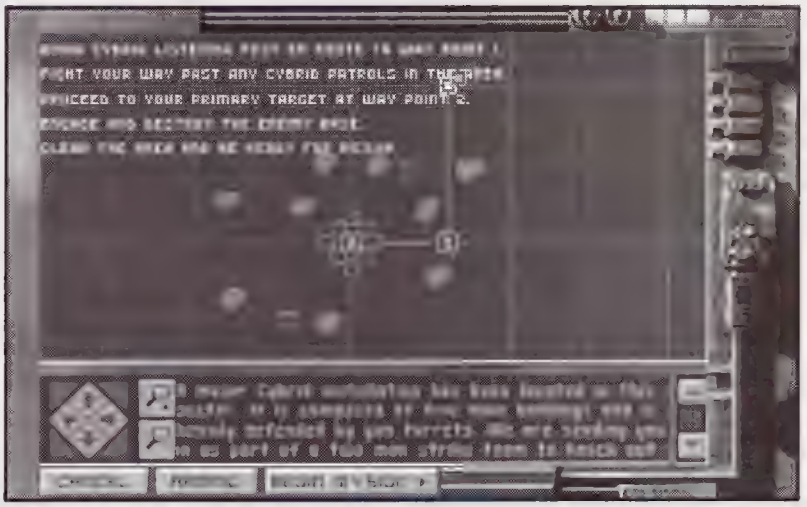
A simple rule applies to these missions: Once you have targeted the base, get away as quickly as possible or else you will die. Choose a fast HERC and don't waste hard points with missile arrays unless you're an expert with ARM or EO missiles.

If they're available, carry an ECM, but make sure you do not activate it until gun towers or guard HERCs have begun to fire on you. The other weaponry should be a mix of energy weapons (lasers or EMPs) and ATCs.

Often, a Cybrid HERC will be posted somewhere along your assigned route. Unless you're completely incompetent, you should score an easy first shot against it and send it running home. It is critical for you to take out a leg or blow it up before it can alert the whole base to your presence.

If you cannot take out the Cybrid sentry before it reaches the base perimeter (i.e., before you can detect main buildings visually or at least on radar), FORGET ABOUT IT. Start selecting targets as quickly as you can hit the buttons. As soon as you get the "mission target detected" message, get out of there. Don't try to fight — especially since most of the Cybrids will not follow you too far away from the base.

Strike



Take out a Cybrid base. No problem, right? After that, you'll take out your own appendix without anesthesia.

To make matters worse, the success or failure of the campaign is often dependent on these missions (you'll know from the briefing — your COs rarely have trouble expressing urgency).

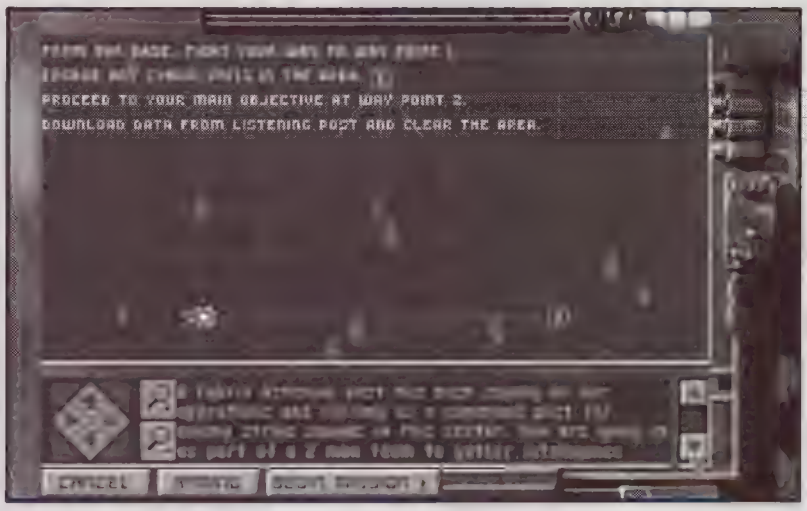
Because this mission requires you to blow things up, stealth isn't particularly important. Take an ECM pod only if you're expecting heavy missile resistance. As you approach the base, quite often the first thing you'll see is a gun tower. If your HERC has the long distance firepower (EMPs, guns, and EO missiles), try to take out the tower without selecting it as a target first.

Remember the following during Strike missions:

1. Focus on your primary goals. Gun towers, Arachnitrons, and Cybrid HERCs are all wonderful to kill. Your job, however, is to take out the major buildings (hangar, generator, radar tower etc.) above all. Everything else is secondary.
2. Even when you get lucky and the base doesn't seem especially well guarded, the Cybrids are almost as touchy about their homes as we are about ours. Cybrid reinforcements will come eventually, so while you may be taking out nonessential targets for fun and salvage, always keep an eye on your radar. Be prepared to sacrifice nonessential targets in the interest of escaping the newcomers.

3. More often than not, the bases are more than ready for you, so you must keep tight reins on your team. With Buzzards, Arachnitrons, standard HERCs, and buildings all likely targets, a simple "Fire at will" isn't going to do it. Keep them close to you and make sure they're either taking out major installations or working on the most threatening resistance.

Raid



If the Cybrids hadn't taken over the satellites, we'd be able to perform raids safely from space. Unfortunately, that's not the case. We have to get right next to an installation, cram an "information vacuum" straight into a Cybrid radar tower or listening post, and see what we can grab. Since information is so precious, avoid combat wherenever you can.

Often, using the shortest path to your destination means running through a line of Cybrid gun towers, so go around them, choosing the path that seems to have the most favorable terrain.

If you're traveling with other HERCs, keep them close to you until you're downloading information, then let them get involved in a firefight to draw the carnage away from you.

Also make sure that once the Cybrid HERCs are neutralized, your team doesn't start taking shots at the radar before you're done downloading.

Aborting/Mission Failure

Regardless of all the testing we do to weed out the losers, and despite the assist you'll get from this tome, it's possible that you'll make a minor error in judgment (i.e. a mistake), one of your squad will mess up early on in the mission, or the Cybrids will be especially well prepared for you're arrival.

Sometimes there will be no way for you to complete the mission's goals. More often, you'll be pretty sure you can't complete them without dying or at least sacrificing a lot of good hardware. Toward the top of the following list, if you abort, at the very least, the war will be dealt a serious setback, and in the worst case the war will be lost altogether. Toward the bottom of this list, the most important thing is not losing equipment so aborting becomes an acceptable alternative. Now you face another one of those ugly decisions. Here, in descending order of importance, are the mission descriptions and some guidelines to help you decide whether and when to abort.

Scamble (Campaign Ending)

Phrases like "last hope" tend to appear in these mission briefings. If you're in a defensive campaign and mess up one of these, pray the Cybrids kill you before the battle is over.

Strike (Campaign Ending)

If your CO sounds especially moribund about what will happen if you fail to take out a particular Cybrid base, humanity has a lot riding on you. Do not abort unless you're positive that there's absolutely no way to succeed.

Several centuries back, the naval custom developed that a captain should go down with the ship — or at least be the absolute last person to be rescued. We think it's a fine idea — especially considering how easy it is to send your squad members to their deaths while you glide through the mission. So if there's even the slightest chance that your squad can finish the job that you can't — let them try. Especially in the later campaigns, death is preferable to failure under these circumstances.

Special Strike Ops

Special Strike Ops involve keeping technology (new weapons, HERCs, etc.) from the Cybrids. If you fail, you'll be facing the consequences for a long time — especially if we lose the war and the Cybrids enslave us.

Escort

It's real simple — whatever you're guarding is probably far more important to the human resistance than you are.

Search and Rescue (Pilot with Experimental Weapon, Key Cybrid Info)

Not only a helpless human's life depends on you; so does technology that will be very helpful in keeping your own hide intact.

Scramble

If the Cybrids take out more than 60% of the base, you lose the mission and, if you're not in any shape to fight, it's time to go underground and face your CO.

Raid (for Weapons)

As in the Search and Rescue mission, a failed raid means losing technology that could be the key to your survival.

Search and Rescue (Pilot Only)

Just think how you'd feel if you were in that crippled HERC and some amateur ran away, leaving you at the nonexistent mercy of the Cybrids.

Raid (General Communications and Information)

Fail this one, and you'll be affected, but it's nearly impossible to quantify how valuable the information would have been in planning future missions. Nevertheless, expect some abnormally difficult times ahead.

Recon

Like a Raid, but since all you're getting is some basic target information, failure is better than death.

Patrol and Scout missions

If you lose any HERCs on these missions, you should feel really ashamed. If your team's getting munched, don't be afraid to cut your losses.

When Not to Engage

There's one part of your mission description that shows up often in Recon and a few other missions. It's too important not to explain in this document.

"Do not engage the enemy base."

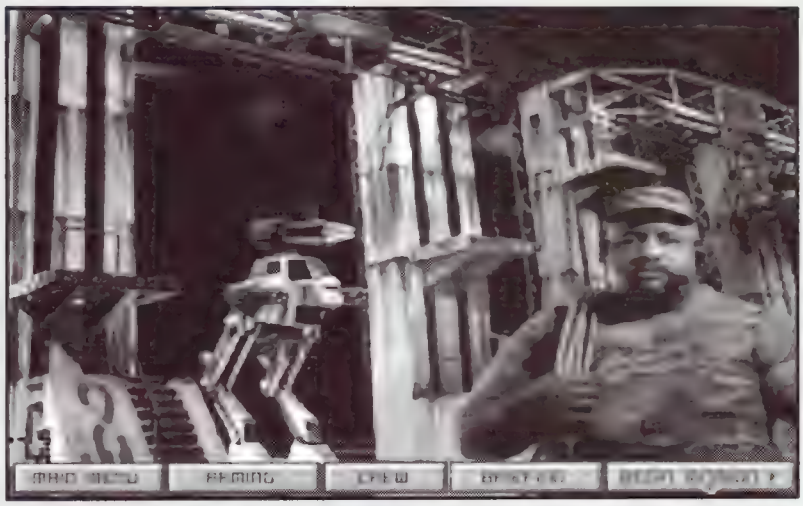
Get used to this one, for your ability to execute it determines how many unnecessary deaths it will prevent.

Once your targeting computer tells you that the base has been entered into memory, your job is to get out as quickly as possible — no matter how inadequate the base's defenses may seem or how much good you think taking out a few buildings would do. If you then attack one of the main buildings, two things will happen:

1. Every Cybrid for at least a thousand kilometers will know about you and, if available, will do its best to reduce your HERC to scrap.
2. Cybrid intelligence will look at such a foolhardy attack and determine that human activity in this sector is much more of a threat. Expect stronger defenses and maybe even a preemptive strike against us.

The Service Bay

Here are descriptions of the various HERCs you'll find in the service bay with the preferred weapons configuration for the various missions for each one.

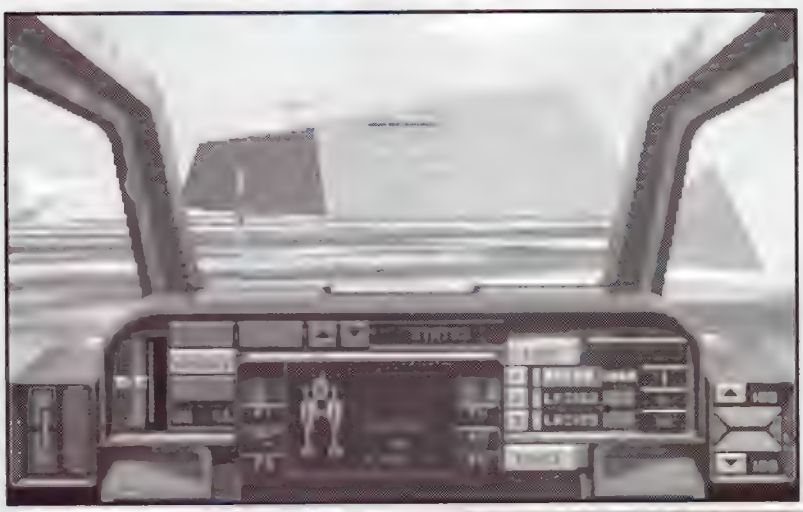


Light HERCs

Small and fast, these two HERCs can be built in one mission's time. Because of its ability to carry 500mm ATCs and 300gw lasers, the Roadrunner is preferable about 90% of the time.

Roadrunner

Mass: 18 tons
Height: 5.4 meters
Speed: 84 kph
Weapons Capacity: 3
Salvage Req. to Build: 50 tons
Cannot Use: EMP, ELF, PBW, MISS8, MISS10



Speed and the potential to hold a 300gw laser make this a surprisingly useful HERC on any type of mission.

This basic Roadrunner configuration is good for all missions except Raid. It barely has any armor, so

plan on swinging the majority of your shield energy to whichever side is most exposed. If both are exposed, it's time to run to a better position.

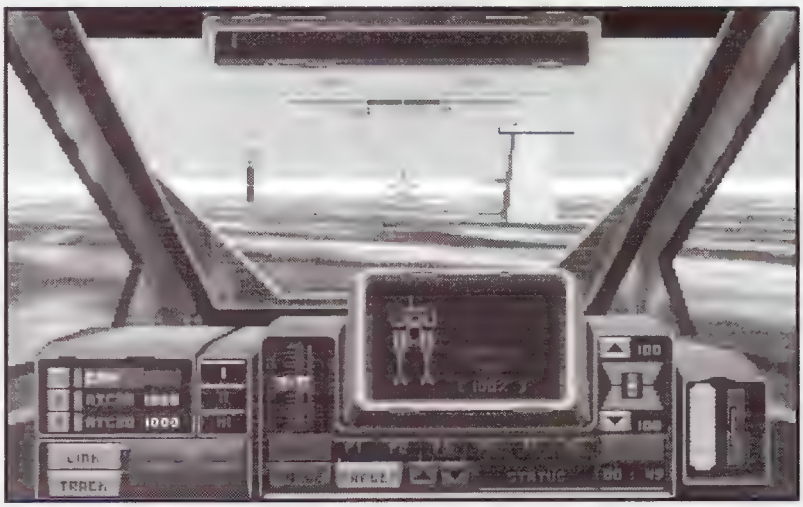
If you have no other HERCs and must take a Roadrunner on a Raid mission, this is the configuration you want. Link the lasers.

Outlaw

Mass: 27 tons
Height: 6.1 meters
Speed: 80 kph
Weapons Capacity: 3
Salvage Req. to Build: 60 tons
Cannot Use: 300gw laser, 50mm ATC, MISS8, MISS10, PBW, ELF

Do not use the Outlaw until your first recon mission or the development of the EMP.

Until you get something bigger, this is the best setup for any of the shorter combat missions (Strikes, Scrambles, and any Patrol or Scout with three or fewer waypoints). Go ahead and link the ATCs until you have less than 300 rounds in each.

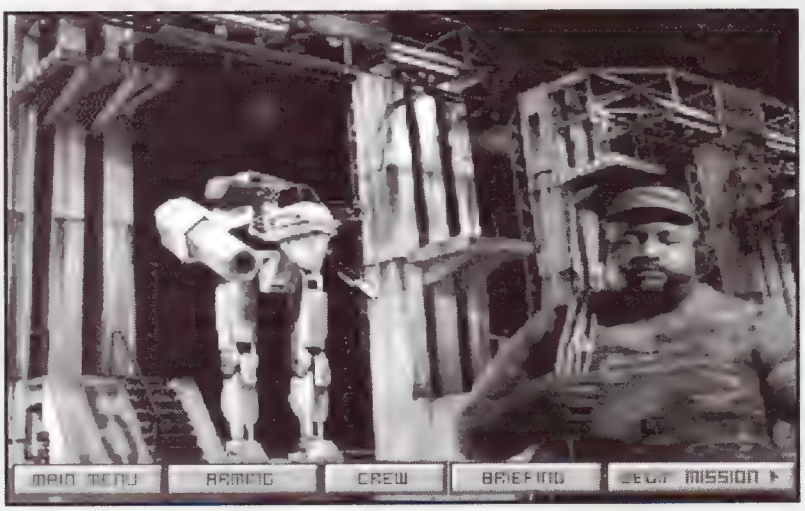


This is the best setup for any Raid mission. Feel free to replace one of the lasers with a 35mm ATC if you really want to.

Medium HERCs

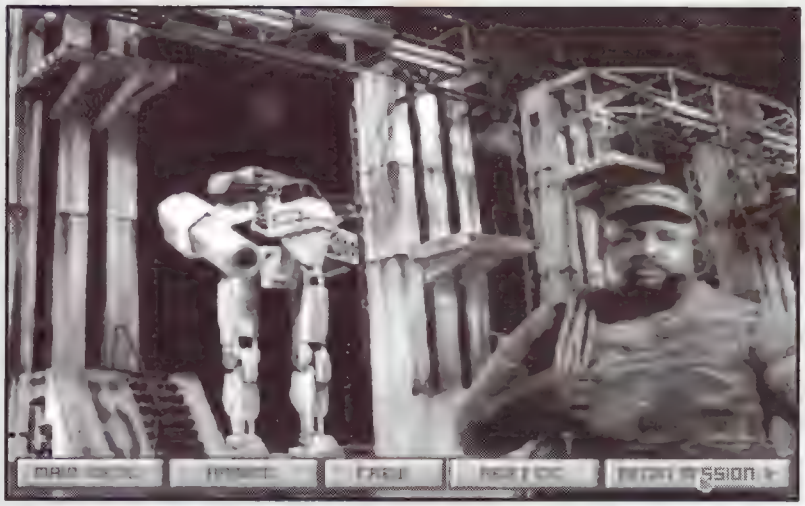
These take two or three missions to build. The Tomahawk, with its five "open" hard points, is easily the best of the three — especially since it can use anything but a MISS10 (and if you want missiles, that's what Patriots are for.)

Raptor



Mass: 36 tons
Height: 7.0 meters
Speed: 76 kph
Weapons Capacity: 4
Salvage Req. to Build: 80 tons
Time Req. to Build: 2 missions
Cannot Use: 300gw Laser, 50mm ATC, ELF, MISS10

It can't carry the big cannons or lasers, but that Raptor has far more armor around the hard points than a Gunslinger. If you're more interested in having your firepower distributed among the

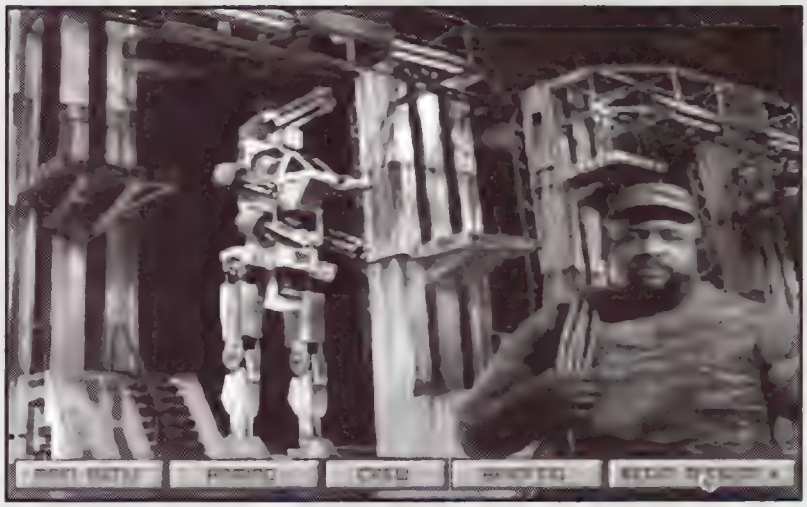


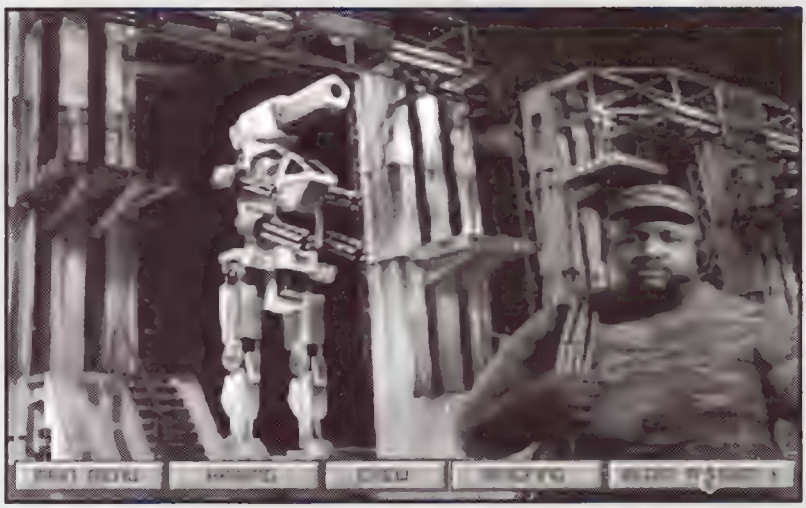
hard points than in the big guns, this is definitely your craft.

For a Scramble, Strike or short round the points mission, this is what you want. Link the guns for the duration on Strikes and until they get below 300 rounds each on the other missions.

If you don't feel comfortable with anything smaller and faster, this is a good model for Raids.

This is the best configuration for Recon missions.



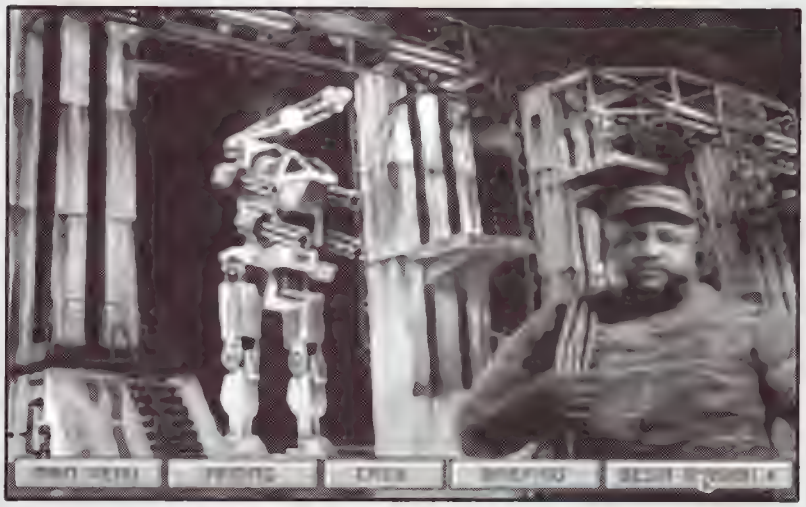


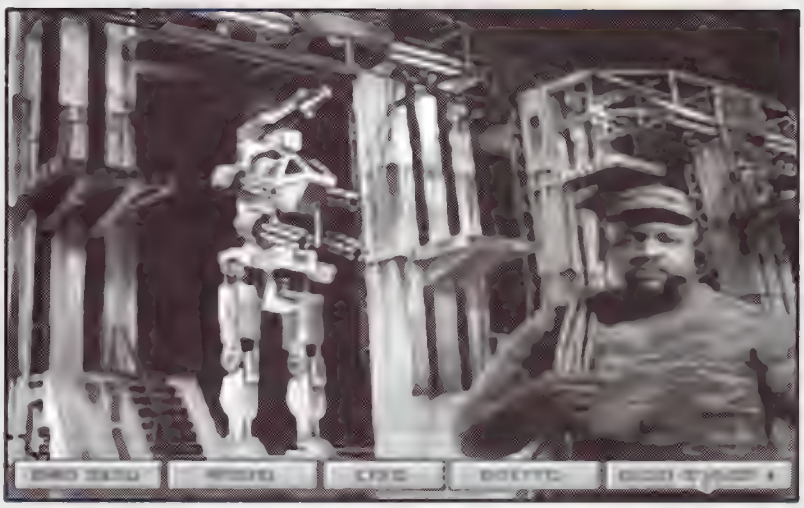
Tomahawk

Mass: 45 tons
Height: 7.6 meters
Speed: 71 kph
Weapons Capacity: 5
Salvage Req. to Build: 100 tons
Time Req. to Build: 3 missions
Cannot Use: MISS10

The Tomahawk is arguably the most balanced craft around. You lose little speed over the Raptor and gain not only armor, but weapons, including ones that don't fit on the Raptor.

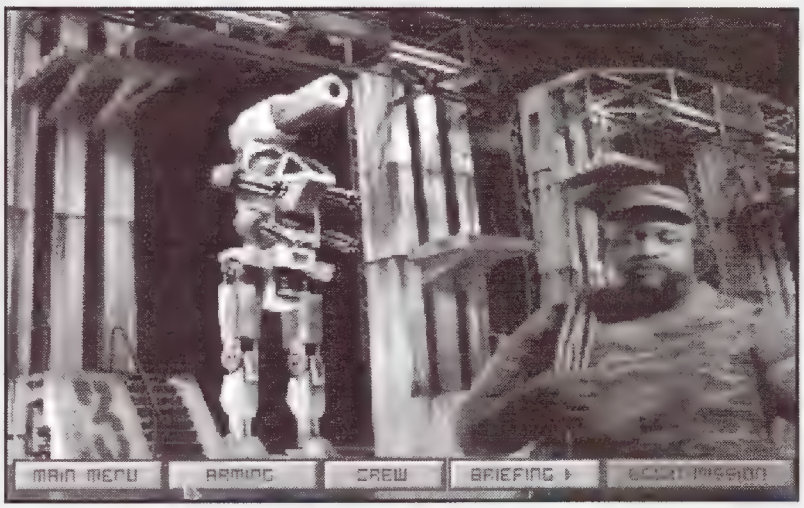
Easily the best configuration is one with a 50mm ATC on top and 35mm ATCs and 200gw lasers on the side. Notice the placement of the side weapons. This way, if the Cybrids attack from above or from the side, you'll always have a mix of weaponry.

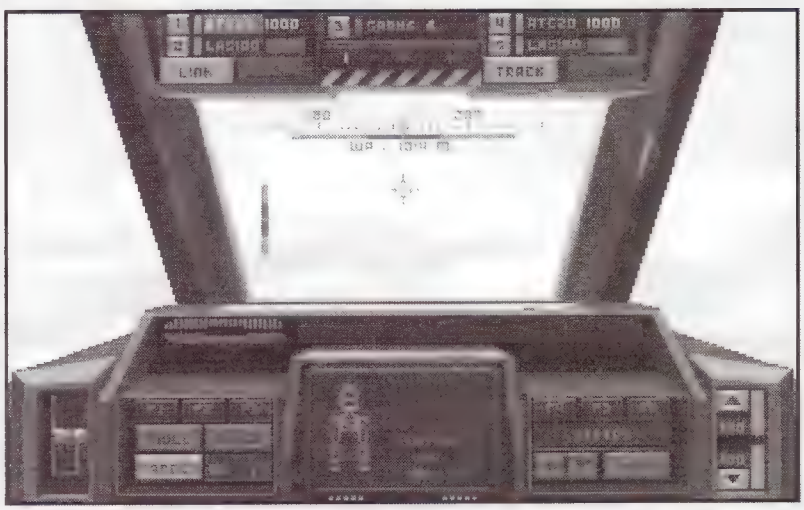


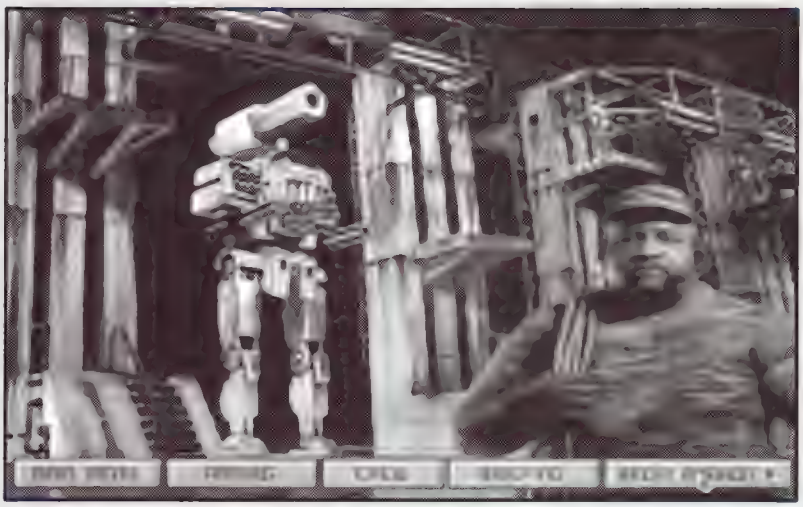


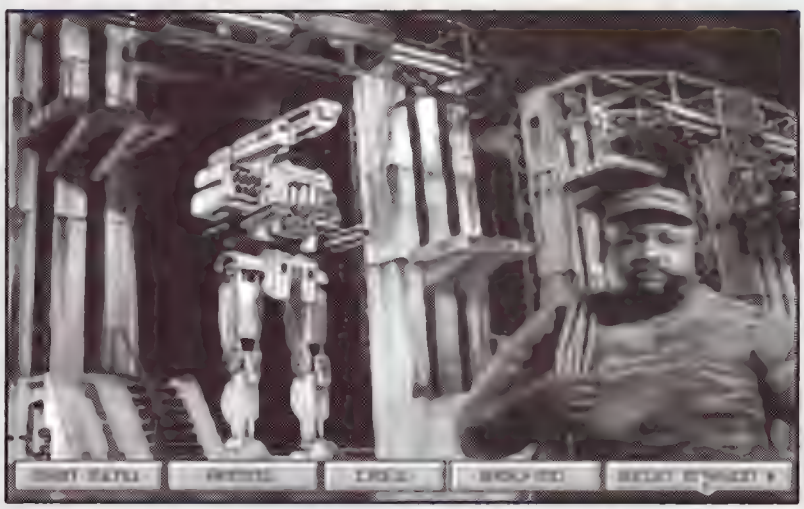
Tomahawk Offensive Options

Additional Tomahawk Offensive Configuration and HUD









Patriot

Mass: 50 tons
Height: 8.2 meters
Speed: 64 kph
Weapons Capacity: 6
Salvage Req. to Build: 120 tons
Time Req. to Build: 3 missions
Can Use Everything

The Patriot is designed to hold more missiles compared to total mass than any other HERC. If it is the biggest HERC in your squad, take it for yourself only if you're comfortable relying heavily on missiles. Since your duties often require you to monitor and control your squad, such restricted weaponry — in both difficulty of use and

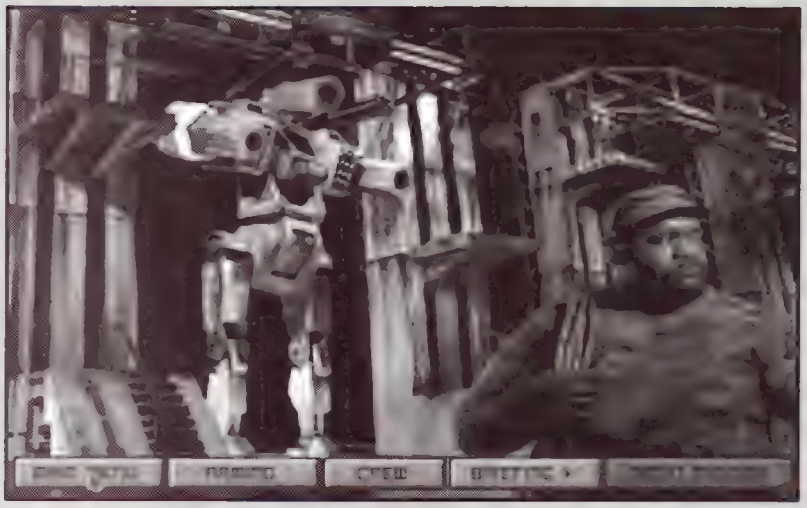
quantity of ammo — is not worth the price. Give this one to your squad and be happy with a fully gunned Tomahawk.

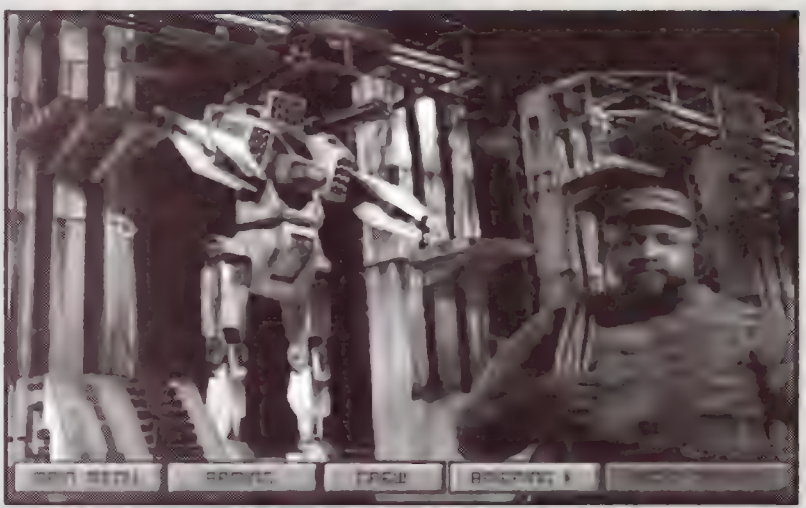
Heavy HERCs

Since these take three missions to build, don't expect to see them until well into the war. The critical thing to remember is that, even though they have big generators to handle multiple high-energy weapons, those same generators have to feed your shields and movement. You are now able to use 50mm ATCs in quantity. Never forget about them, no matter how cool multiple ELFs may look.

Rhino

Mass: 54 tons
Height: 8.5 meters
Speed: 56 kph
Weapons Capacity: 7
Salvage Req. to Build: 140 tons
Can Use Everything

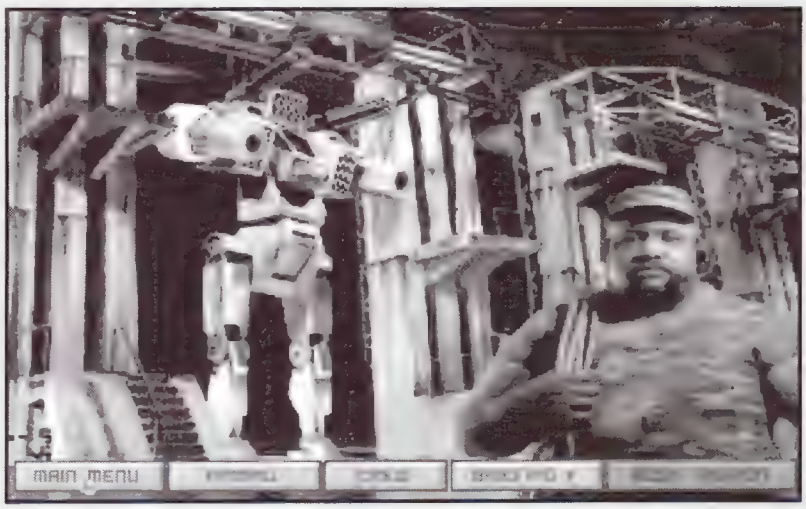


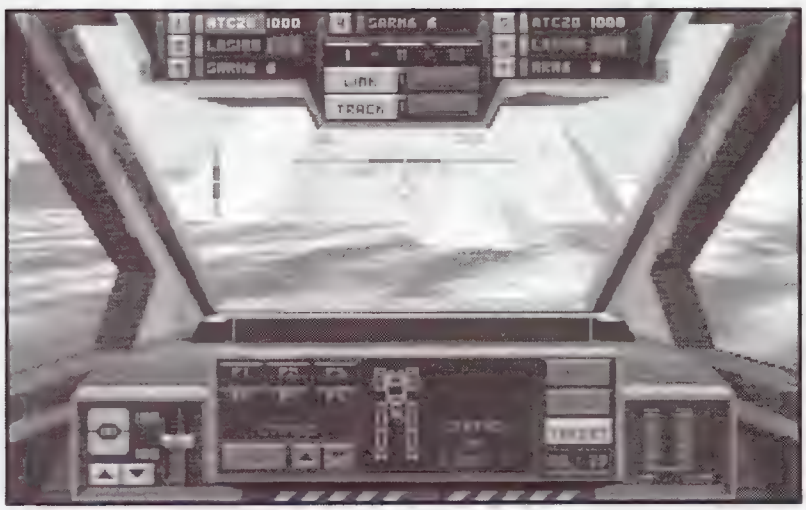


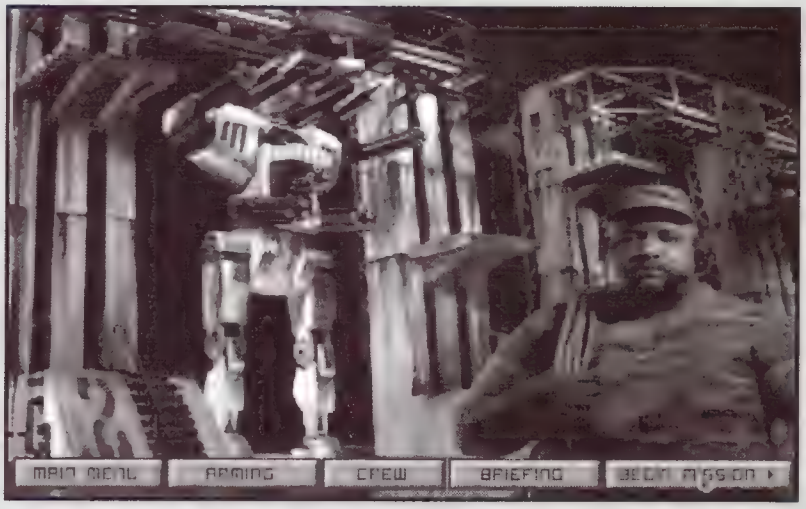
A significant leap in quality over the Patriot, this HERC has two missile-only hard points and five spots that will take almost anything.

Even better, those five hard points are big and solid. You can slap 50mm ATCs on the side and save the top three for energy hogs — or put the energy guzzlers on the side. (Note that keeping the ATCs on the sides allows them to be linked while ensuring that they're far apart.)

Rhino Offensive Configuration and HUD



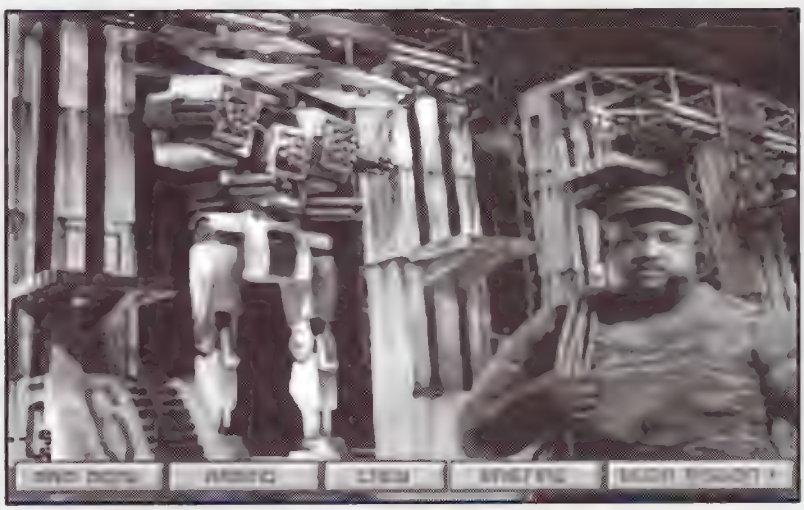




Samson

Mass: 63 tons
Height: 9.2 meters
Speed: 52 kph
Weapons Capacity: 8
Salvage Req. to Build: 170 tons

Arguably the most "fun" HERC to command, its armor is second in protection only to the Colossus. More importantly, in contrast to the Patriot, the Samson is designed to take anything but missile racks. The best strategy when selecting weapons for a Samson is to take only a few high-powered energy weapons (especially EMPs) and then fill the remainder of the hard points with 50mm ATCs.



Colossus

Mass: 77 tons
Height: 10.4 meters
Speed: 46 kph
Weapons Capacity: 9
Salvage Req. to Build: 200 tons
Can Use Everything

The Colossus is the biggy — slow-moving but powerful. If you can get 'em, use 'em.

Colossus Offensive Options and HUD

General Strategies

Where to Shoot

Aiming for the legs

The major problem with this is that the actuator is a thin, tough device and the odds of damaging it are not good, even when your shots have penetrated the armor. This is why it's never a good idea to use missiles against the legs unless you have extras to spare.

Aiming for the Waist

This is an effective way to kill your opponent. On most enemy craft, waist armor is comparable to other areas. More importantly, it houses the engine and hydraulic systems. Keep in mind that, unlike the more heavily armored cockpit, the waist is difficult to hit. Make sure you have enough missiles to endure a few misses.

The chief drawback to this tactic is that it leaves very little salvageable material. But remember, when you feel the enemy has you at an uncomfortable disadvantage, coming back with weapons and scrap becomes the least important goal of any mission.

Aiming for the Cockpit

As discussed in the 10 Commandments, shoot at the cockpit from behind. Not only is the rear of the cockpit more lightly armored, but the enemy will have no mobility or firing problems until you knock out the computer pilot. It's difficult to pull this off, but aiming for the cockpit will yield the most usable salvage.

Shooting Hard Points

This tactic incorporates both the Seventh and Tenth Commandments. It should only be used, however, when it can be used safely — which means from the back or not at all.

Targeting

Besides making it possible for certain missiles to work and making it easier to alert teammates about what they should be shooting, targeting affects every weapon on your craft.

Weapons will not fire when the target is not within the ideal range. This means that your ATCs may not fire, even though there is a slight chance that they might hit — and, unlike the energy weapons, do full damage.

Targeting also focuses all of the firing weapons inward at the target, making the volley far more effective if it hits by concentrating the damage on a specific location.

Auto-Tracking

There's an old test for coordination — pat your head and rub your stomach in circles simultaneously. Even for the hyper-coordinated, some concentration is necessary. Imagine performing this trick while wearing a 60-ton metal suit, with other giant robots trying to turn you into canned human. That's what piloting a HERC — moving the head and the body independently — can be like.

To facilitate things, all HERCs have a built-in tracking system which, when activated, will automatically tilt and turn your HERC's head in an effort to keep the targeted HERC or building always within your sights. This can be quite useful, but only if you're able to handle these two side effects.

1. Often you will be moving in a different direction from the one you're currently facing. Using the terrain map [F3] can help but that means monopolizing your viewfinder with the map.
2. Nobody on the battlefield is going to ignore you simply because your targeting computer is so single-minded. Not only is the constant movement disorienting, it makes it easier to forget about whatever's not targeted — like other enemy HERCs, friendly HERCs, terrain hazards and obstacles, the mission goals, etc. This problem can be aggravated by the use of the terrain map advised above.

The best time to use tracking is when facing Buzzards — and then, only after you're sure nobody on the ground will be able to take advantage of the fact that you will not be able to protect yourself.

Remember the Fifth commandment.

Linking Weapons

Linking weapons is generally a good idea. It concentrates firepower, promotes rapid firing in chains (because both fire whenever it's either weapon's turn), and looks nice and symmetrical.

Unfortunately, the more you fire, the quicker you deplete your energy and ammunition. 1000 rounds of ATC ammunition is plenty for your average Recon mission, but on a standard patrol it's disconcerting to find you've used several hundred rounds from each gun before you even make it to the first waypoint.

Similarly, energy weapons get drained quickly, and if one doesn't have the energy to fire on its turn, neither will fire. Nothing is worse than suddenly wondering why your lasers aren't firing, then watching the Cybrids play target practice with your HERC while you scramble to unlink your weapons.

Maintaining Range

Your range should be determined first by your approach, and then, if you have the luxury to decide further, by:

1. Your movement capabilities
2. Your weapons
3. The significance of the kill to completing your orders

From the Side

Side attacks can rarely be maintained for more than a few seconds. Therefore, when an enemy is exposed from the side, charge straight for it blasting away.

Face-to-Face

Frontal assaults are stupid and should be avoided at all costs, but if you find yourself going toe-to-toe with an enemy, the most

important thing to remember is to never get so close that you don't have a clear view of all enemy hard points.

There is an old Earth sport called sumo wrestling. The main offensive tactic in it is bashing bellies with the opponent at maximum force. The goal is to knock the opponent off balance and out of the circle, thus winning the game. To lower their center of gravity, sumo wrestlers would eat as much as possible, making themselves enormously fat.

The point is this: The more you become in sync with your HERC, the more you tend to mistake its anatomy for your own. HERCs, however, aren't people. Even with their relatively high centers of gravity, they're more stable than buildings 10 times their height. If tripping HERCs was possible, this would be an entirely different war fought in much smaller machines. Remember, before Project Prometheus really got off the ground, all of the excitement about HERCs centered around their gyro and hydraulic mechanisms.

What's especially dangerous about a frontal assault is that, even if both of you are stopped dead in your tracks, anticipating the enemy's next move is not just guesswork, it leaves absolutely no margin of error.

If the bad guy turns to your left and you veer right, not only are you out of each other's sights, but the odds are the tin can will compensate much faster and be exactly where it wants to be: away, at your rear, or pounding on your side.

If a collision seems likely for some reason, make sure that your tactical map [F3] has been activated. Having a clear picture of the nearby terrain is crucial is to reestablishing contact with the enemy on your terms, as well as making an escape; sometimes it will seem that these two actions are simultaneous.

Rear Assault

This is always the best approach. It might seem like a good idea to improvise, given the large numbers of variables on the battlefield, but it is always a better idea to have your strategy in

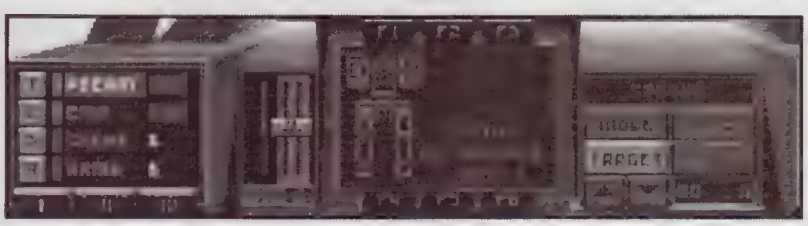
mind before you enter battle and adjust your energy weapon's recharge priorities accordingly. Between managing firing chains, linked weapons, and movement, you will have plenty to worry about. For close attacks, you'll want the PBWs, EMPs, and ELFs given priority. (Remember it as the "abbreviation" attack.) Also make sure that ELF usage is accompanied by plenty of energy to the forward shields in case the target starts exploding. Otherwise, divert most of your energy to the rear shields, since rear armor is thinner.

For medium- and long-range attacks, stick with your basics: lasers, ATCs, and missiles. After all, if it's necessary to switch your radar into active mode, there's no better place to be than directly behind the Cybrid's missile arrays.

What Your HERC Can Tell You

What's going on? Here are descriptions of the various types of information your HERC can supply.

Status [F1]



Rarely during an actual career mission will it be smart to keep this screen on for more than a quick peek. However, this is the perfect way to learn how to weave while being pursued. Not only will you have almost blow-by-blow updates, but it will be easy to tell if they're still getting the shots they wanted.

FlashCOMM [F2]

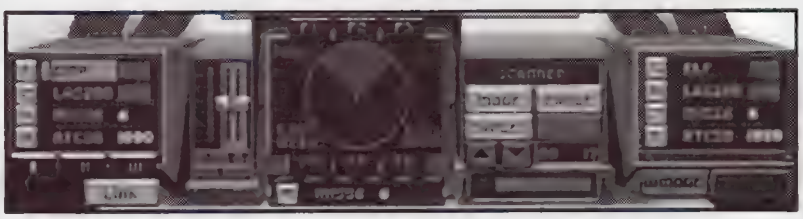
This will be covered in the section entitled "Learning to Play with Others."

Navigation Map [F3]

Most pilots who live learn the value of this special feature before they even complete their first mission. This topological map allows you to see rocks in your path regardless of which way your head is turned. Use this option when you're tracking an opponent — especially an aerial one — and trying to move at the same time.

If you're being pursued, this is a true lifesaver. Not only does it point out rocks not in view, it also clearly delineates whether there are spaces between those rocks. Nothing is worse than finding your escape route completely blocked off while enemy HERCs are shooting at your backside.

Radar [F4]



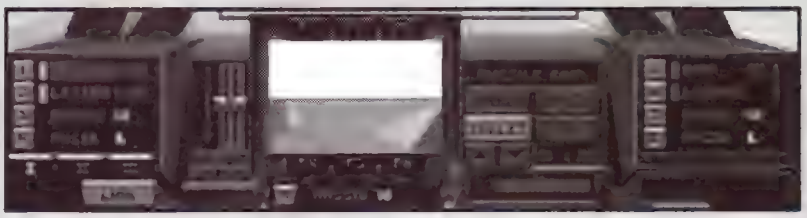
This should be your default choice while looking at the HUD. The one thing to remember is that the radar has three different ranges. Unless you're really concerned about judging distances between nearby HERCs, always keep radar on the widest sweep.

Target Information [F5]

Like the status option [F1], this should be used frequently, and never for more

than a few seconds at a time. Besides showing exactly where your opponent is weak — something you should already know through your viewscreens — this will tell you whether or not shields are still up. If they are down, take the EMPs off the chain and start firing the missiles.

Missile View [F6]



This view will give you a great visual ride that shows you exactly where the missile hit. If you're not using EO missiles, which must be guided according to what you see here, you probably have something better to look at.

You can turn a missile into a spying device by using the missile cam viewscreen. This is particularly helpful when facing terrain obstructions.

Command Display [F7]

This will be covered in more detail under "Learning To Play with Others." The one thing to notice here is that you have a full map which will display all friendly and all known Cybrid HERCs within a range much bigger than even the widest radar sweep.

Take special note of the magnifying glasses. Be sure to zoom in if you're not sure of the terrain. From the standard overhead view, it isn't always easy to tell if there's a crawl space between terrain obstacles.

Detailed Damage Display [F8]

This display shows HERC status down to every last bit of armor plating — it makes F1 look like a mood ring in accuracy and detail. Unfortunately, checking it out means taking your eyes off the heads-up display — which is always risky.

Learning to Play with Others

As complex as Cybrid AI and technology may be, the human ability to cooperate and think three-dimensionally is key to our survival. Therefore, on almost any mission that doesn't require stealth, you'll be assigned at least one teammate.

As squad leader, not only will you be able to command them during missions, you are also responsible for the assignment and arming of their HERCs. Remember that your orders supersede individual combat styles, but sometimes you'll have to make your case. A Cybrid in your targeting window or an active radar-enhanced view of the battlefield adds conviction to your cries for help.

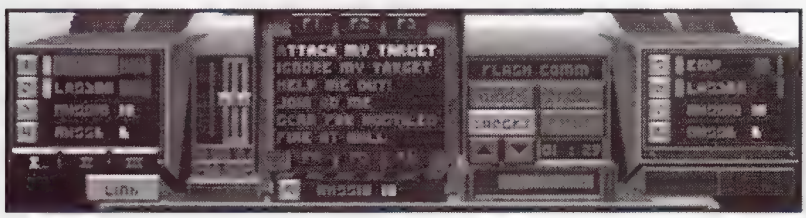
Although it may be tempting to put the less experienced members in bigger, better-armored HERCs, don't. A trained chimp can effectively use most weapons, so don't think this has anything to do with optimizing firepower. Given a choice, Cybrids will choose to attack the larger HERC and you'll need good pilots to handle that pressure.

The one exception to the "chimp" comparison involves missiles. Missiles are a real pain because, for most of them, you have to make sure that you've sent the appropriate radar use command and that you don't have your squad inadvertently emptying its arrays into a minor target due to a mistimed "Attack my target" command. Further compounding this hassle is your inability to discern how many missiles each squad member has without looking out the window and counting.

The obvious lesson is that any hard points that aren't missile-only (as some on the larger HERCs are) should be equipped with the most powerful non-missile weapons available. If the hard points or an understocked arsenal require you to give missiles to your squad, make them electro-optical, and give them only to the very best squad member you've got.

For an assortment of reasons, many of them incomprehensible, if not classified, HERC communication is limited to a list of sweeping orders that will reach all HERCs [F2] and when it is safe, HERC to HERC commands [F7]. Here's a rundown of the specific commands.

FlashCOMM [F2]



All friendly HERCs will hear these messages, but expect only the one closest to you to respond all of the time. This is ideal for when your squad consists of only yourself and one other HERC, or when you want distant HERCs to continue what they're doing. It isn't very good for picking up any stragglers in your group.

Attack My Target

Always a decent option when first encountering the enemy, this will ensure that your squad's first salvo is as effective as

possible. It's also good for having your squad-mates take out any annoying fliers while you forge ahead.

Keep in mind that you must have a target selected, with all of the repercussions this brings (auto-tracking, weapons' ranges, etc.) This is also good for ensuring that your squad makes the best use of its firepower. If you're on a Strike mission and are badly outnumbered by enemy HERCs, this can ensure that your squad takes out the buildings as quickly as possible so you all can leave.

During combat, once you've given the order to "Fire at will," it's a good idea to hit [A] before returning to your other views. This keystroke might seem like a pointless preparation, but once the enemy is engaged, FlashCOMM is the last place you want to waste time and a viewscreen that is better used to display HERC status, tactical maps, or missile status.

Ignore My Target

Often the biggest threat on the map is not the one you're engaging in combat. If you're busy taking out buildings and all of a sudden enemy HERCs appear blocking off most potential escape passages, you're not going to want to concentrate the squad's firepower on finishing off a hangar.

Sometimes, when fighting larger HERCs, you will seem to take out 90% of the enemy's weapons without scoring a kill. The comrades who were essential in reducing the targeted tin cans to a pair of running legs would be wasting their time and resources chasing it around the terrain — especially if there are healthier foes out there.

Help Me Out!

This is the perfect cry when you have a Cybrid on your tail or more than one interested in turning you into paste.

It's important to remember that, even if nearby allies can help without unduly endangering themselves (such as leaving a heated skirmish), it will take time for them to get their weapons targeted, let alone to arrive at the actual carnage. That's

the time to abort the mission and pray the base can respond quickly enough.

Join on Me!

Some targets are meant to be left alone in the interest of successfully completing the mission (e.g., the rows of gun towers encountered on most Raid missions). Rather than restrict your squad's ability to fight — especially when the sky is filled with Buzzards — this calls them to your side, while you veer off course so the target doesn't even become a temptation.

Scan for Hostiles!/Emcon

There are times when it's important for you to find the enemy no matter what the consequences of discovery (many Special Ops, for instance), you want to distract the Cybrids' attention (Scramble and Search and Rescue missions), or you simply want to equip your squad with missiles other than electro-optical.

Either way, once you send it, this will be an easy command to forget about. For example, two-thirds of the way through the battle is not the time you'd instinctively stop and say "all of the squad's missiles are gone," so you must force yourself to learn this survival behavior. Similarly, after setting up a brilliant surprise attack, or avoiding unnecessary battles with nearby Cybrids, remember to give the squad access to all of their weapons as they attack.

There are times when you want to momentarily flash your radar on and off. Don't bother ordering the squad to do likewise because odds are they will be close enough to you that their scans wouldn't matter. If your allies are far away, use [F8] and issue the command on an individual basis.

Fire at Will/Hold Your Fire

If any Cybrids are within their view or on the radar, the "Fire at will" command will send your squad off to take out the nearest

targets. "Hold your fire" should be used whenever you're concerned about them wasting ammunition on a minor or wounded target that requires minimal damage to finish off, you want your squad to ignore nearby targets and they aren't responding to "Join on me" orders, or you have specific orders (or at least advice) not to engage enemy HERCs/buildings.

Command Display [F7]

This is a more detailed map and communications option. If it's not safe to look, odds are you don't need access to the extra commands. Quick looks are recommended from time to time because they will give you a much better view of the battlefield and all detected enemies. This view will also give you a more detailed idea of the status of your squad. It's always nice to know how everyone's doing — including whether any downed allies are dead or just disabled.

Rarely will you have the time to use these commands after the very beginning of a mission. This is, however, the best way to get the attention of your more distant squad members. In certain situations, they do have a use.

Disengage

If your squad members are running around chasing a flyer when they should be guarding your backside, pursuing other

targets, or at least not trying to attract the Cybrids' attention, this will get them in line. "Disengage" is often followed by a "Join on me."

Attack the Enemy

There are times when you'll have the opportunity to specifically pair your HERCs with targets. For example, it is often best to send the weakest HERCs in the squad to deal with the Buzzards while the tougher HERCs take on the ground targets.

Defend Position

There are three times when you will want to use this:

1. *Scramble missions.* It's not a bad idea to leave one HERC in the middle of the base just in case you get stuck in a firefight or a Cybrid makes it past you.
2. *Raids.* Don't think of this as defending a position, think of it as defending your backside while you download all of the Cybrid data you need.
3. *Search and Rescue missions.* This is a great way of ensuring that the downed HERC is protected from the steady stream of attacking Buzzards while you run the perimeter defense.

Patrol Gridpoint

This is similar to "Defend position," except that it should be used in situations where it's not counter-productive for the HERC to attack anyone encountered on the way to the gridpoint.

Go to Gridpoint

This command is similar to "Defend position" in that the HERC will avoid any enemies on its way to the gridpoint. "Go to gridpoint" allows a second gridpoint to be specified that the ordered HERC will not proceed to until it has reached the first.

Get Out of My Way!

Unfortunately, this was not included in the command options. One of the most frustrating things that can happen is when you give the squad orders to fire — especially attacking a target straight ahead — and, in charging the enemy, they place themselves directly in front of your weapons.

To help prevent this, use the more specific commands [F7] whenever possible. And if not, as soon as you give the attack order, switch your HERC to auto-targeting and move from your current position at a 45-degree angle (moving to your side and forward at about the same rate).

Building and Maintaining Your HERCs

Repair

You may know how to drive a HERC, but Gut is the real master of these metal mammoths.

Gut's a big man with a lot of opinions, but his judgment is sound, so think twice about repairing a HERC he thinks you should scrap. If you don't have enough salvage to get all of your HERCs into top shape, this is how he'd handle the repairs if you let him.

1. Gut will start with your HERC, and then move progressively through the squad, trying to get each one functional by fixing things like the engine, gyros, radar, and targeting computer. If there isn't enough salvage to get a HERC operational, he'll leave it alone.
2. Next, he'll ensure that the operational HERC is also fully ambulatory, fixing any structural damage in the legs.
3. Finally, with whatever's left, he'll repair any smashed hard points and apply fresh armor where needed.

Building New HERCs

As the war proceeds, HERC technology will improve, allowing you to use increasing amounts of your precious scrap tonnage to build HERCs that might stand a chance against the ever-growing Cybrid army.

Unfortunately, you will occasionally find yourself unable to repair and build a fleet without scrapping some of the older models. No matter how good a pilot you may be, using tiny HERCs such as Roadrunners in the latter campaigns is suicide. Here are some guidelines on how to keep strong without sacrificing speed and versatility:

1. The gap between your largest and smallest HERCs' speeds should be at least 10 kph and no more than 20 kph. Scrap anything smaller or faster than that.
2. Keep three HERCs running in top condition and a fourth at no worse than 70%.
3. Once you start building HERCs that require more than two missions to complete, scrap the fourth HERC if it will give you the materials needed to begin construction.
4. Scrap any construction in progress if you're unable to keep at least two HERCs — one of which must be the largest in your squad — running in top condition.

Meet the Cybrids

Cybrid Behavior

On the whole, Cybrid artificial intelligence is fairly straightforward. They each have their basic instructions, and that generally involves killing humans. The only difference is that some are instructed to go after specific targets (such as downed pilots, nuns, and stranded baby carriages) while others must stay within a certain area (such as those guarding a base).

Cybrids will generally attack the largest human HERC, and if two Cybrids are already on the human, any additional HERCs will seek other victims.

Dancing Cybrids

Often a Cybrid will cease forward motion, back up or turn, and then repeat the same cycle. While this works as a wonderful way to dodge your attacks, it is not intentional. The mixture of terrain features, the details of its programming and mission range, and the presence of human HERCs (probably yours) will cause the Cybrid to get confused and do its little dance.

If it's at all safe, stop all movement once you first notice this behavior. There's no way of knowing the parameters of the Cybrid's programming and moving your HERC closer or farther away might resolve the Cybrid's dilemma and spoil your opportunity. Also, if you stop moving, it's much easier to target and hit the enemy. This is a good time to consider auto-tracking.

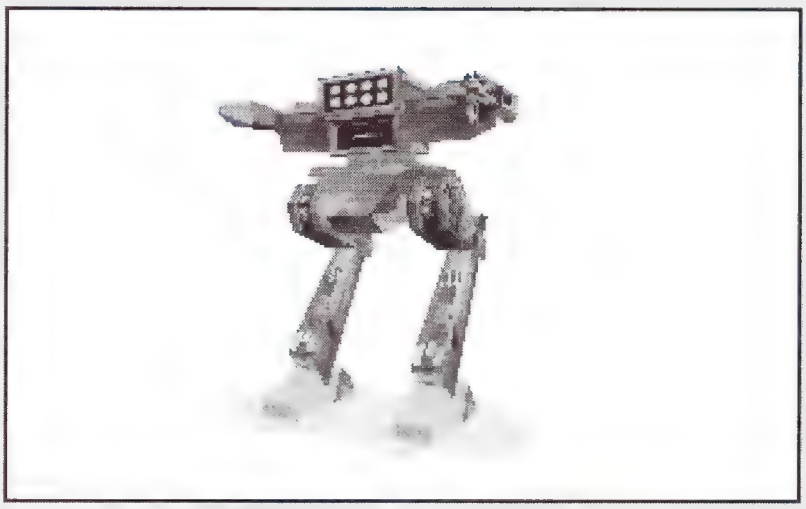
Standard Land HERCs

Unless you're a total incompetent, Cybrid HERC technology does not advance much faster than human. Most bipedal Cybrid HERCs are roughly analogous to human HERCs of similar size and hard point quantity. It is necessary to remember two things:

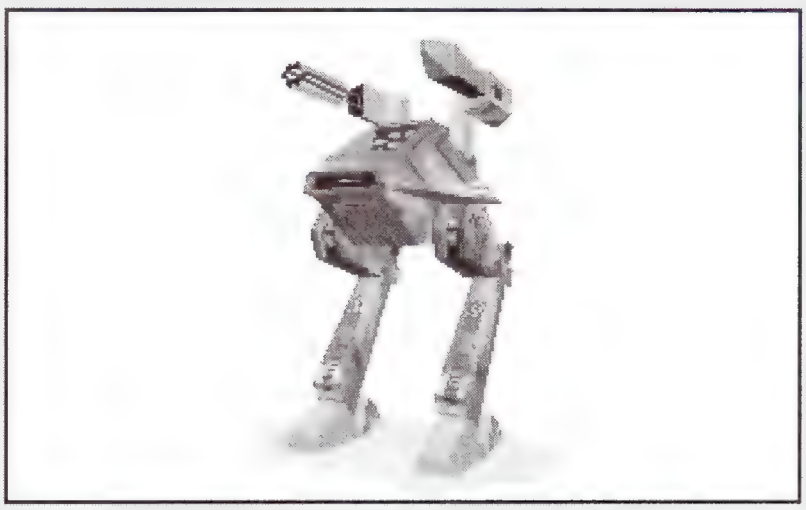
1. Cybrid technology moved the missile racks to the interior of the design much sooner than human engineers. Though probably not intentional, one side effect of this is to make their smaller HERCs look less dangerous than they really are. It's easy to dismiss something with only two visible guns as harmless, until it's emptied an entire missile rack into one of your squad's backsides.
2. Because of everything a human pilot requires — in space as well as resources — Cybrid HERCs tend to be a bit faster than their human analogues.

Cybrid HERC / Closest Human Equivalent

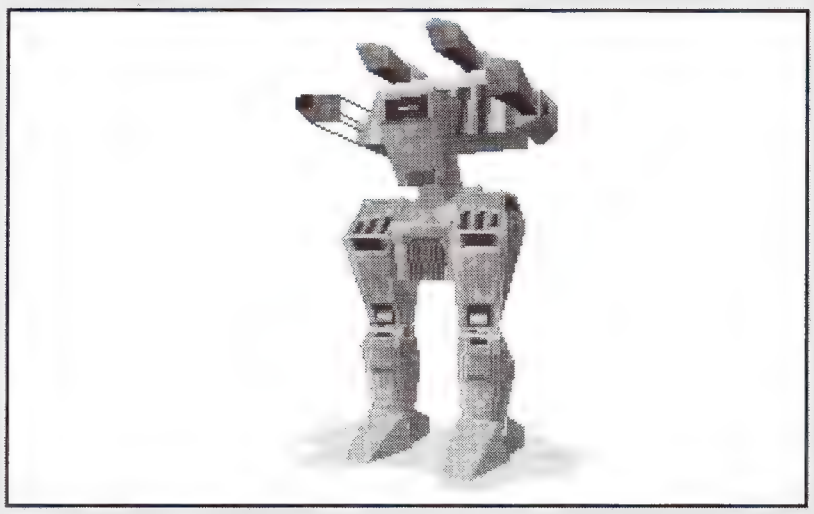
Mongoose / Roadrunner



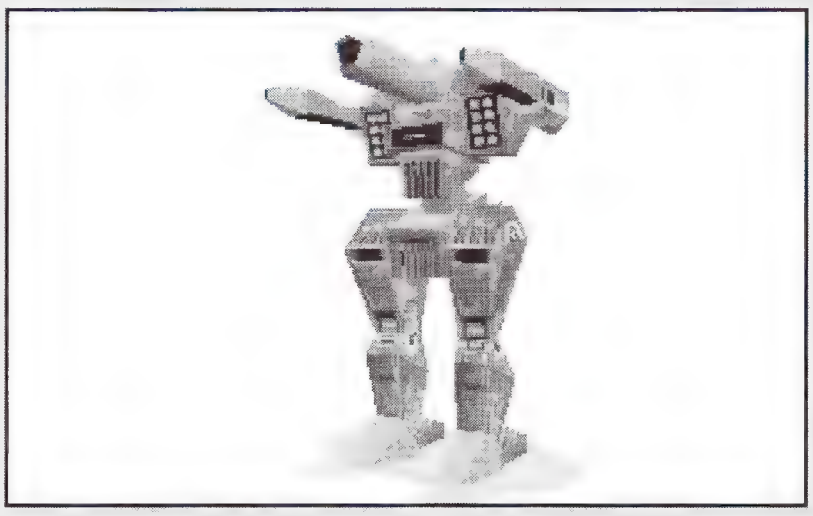
Stingray / Outlaw



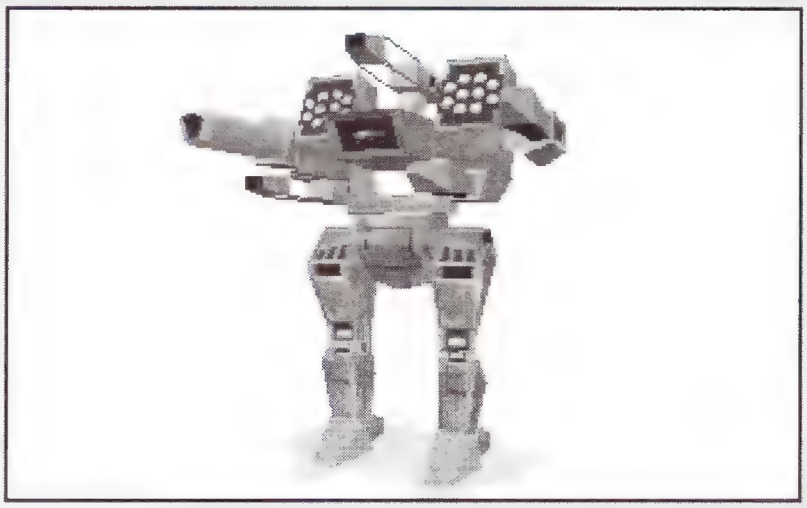
Ramses / Raptor



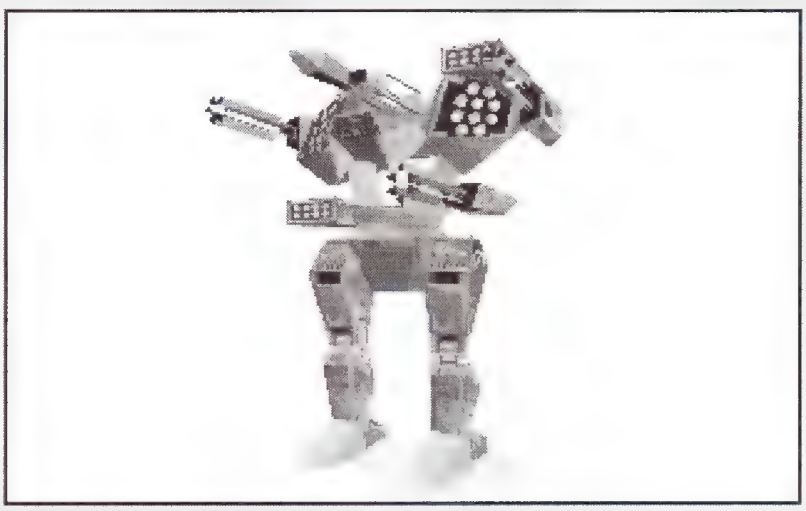
Mirimac / Patriot



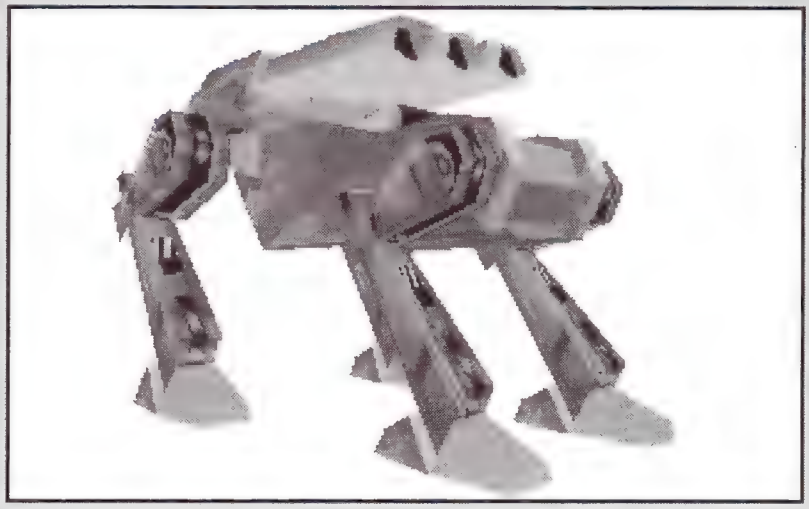
Achilles / Rhino



Hyperion / Samson



Pit Bulls



These four-legged behemoths may not have the firepower of a Hyperion or one of the larger Cybrids, but that doesn't mean you should ignore that jolt of fear you'll experience as soon as one's spotted on the battlefield.

We think the Cybrids obtained the basic design from a computer at a major amusement park before the war. Picture about 50 seats mounted on the exoskeleton and you'll see the potential.

Pit Bulls might be big, but they're also fast. No human HERC can outrun a Pit Bull and chasing one generally involves praying that the long range weapons will hit in those few seconds it remains in range.

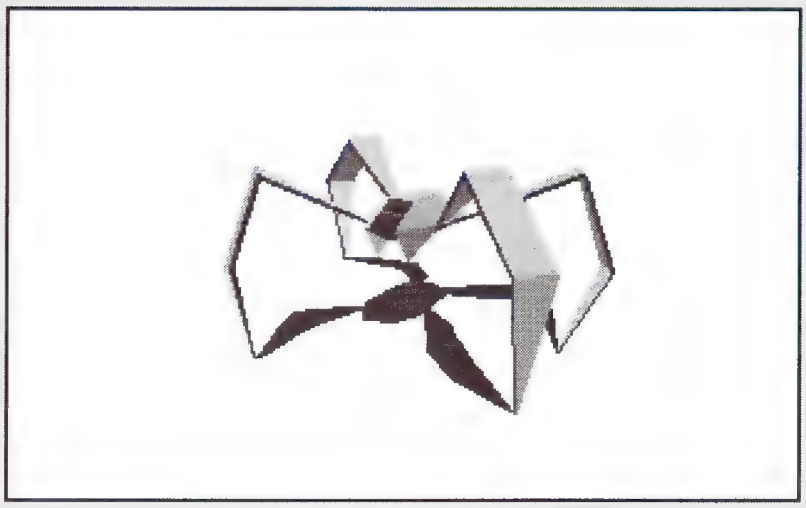
Unlike standard biped HERCs, Pit Bulls can lose a leg and continue functioning. To cripple one, you have to take out two legs.

The Pit Bulls are so large, in fact, that you must concentrate firepower (using the targeting apparatus) if you hope to have any effect. Even then, the Pit Bull will rarely produce an aesthetically pleasing explosion when destroyed. Your targeting computer will generally inform you of your victory long before you notice that the beast has stopped functioning.

Since the Pit Bulls have only one mounted weapon, shooting upward is always a good idea. Just remember that the weapon can pivot 360 degrees, making it impossible for you to ever be out of its sights.

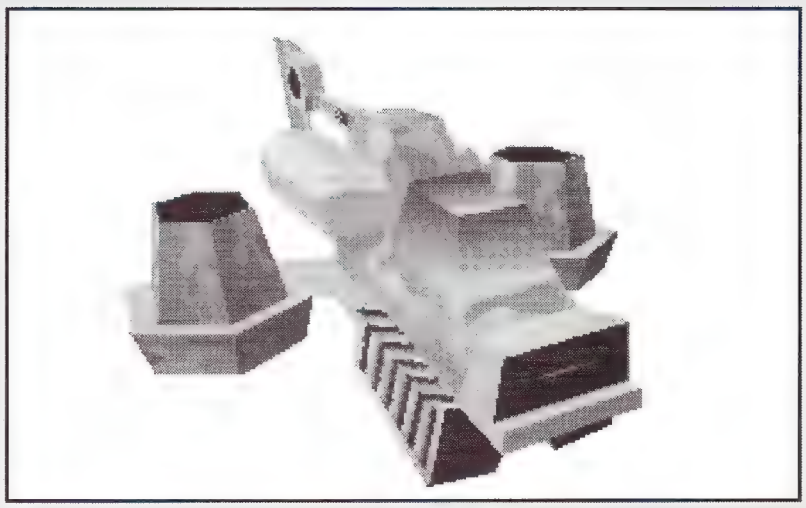
Special Cybrid HERCs

Arachnitrons



Think of these spider-like Cybrids as ground-based homing missiles. Each one will pursue the first human HERC it sees until it makes contact with the target and detonates or is destroyed by human fire. Because they tend to stick to their initial target, you are never safe, no matter how well you dodge them. Considering that only a Roadrunner is faster, frequent [F1] checks are necessary to ensure that you are going after the most important target.

Buzzard Class Landskimmers



Left unchecked, Buzzards armed with missiles can ruin a mission and cripple your legs. Even those armed only with ATCs pose a threat if your shields are

down. Nevertheless, if you have anything ground-based attacking you, always choose that target first. When it's safe, go ahead and use auto-tracking with a little nudging to get a perfect shot on a Buzzard as it flies toward you. Their limited armor makes them a quick kill if you hit them and definitely not worth wasting missiles on unless you have a surplus (such as at the end of a mission that's gone more smoothly than you expected.)

Buildings

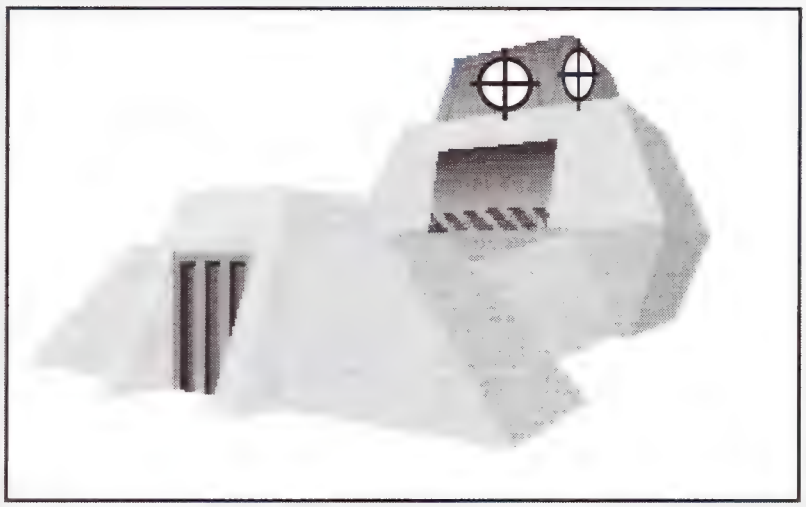
Project Prometheus was so confident and so obsessed with killing humans that they never deemed it worthwhile to worry much about architecture. Their buildings are almost identical to ours, which means we know their weak spots. This kind of knowledge can make or break a Strike mission.

Most buildings yield no salvage. Sometimes a supply base or hangar will have some stuff — if this is probable, the CO will mention it in the mission briefing.

Gun towers are armed with 50mm ATCs, which in very rare cases may be salvageable. (However, there is no way of knowing which ones are special, and there's nothing you can do to ensure salvage, so just blow 'em up and pray.)

Radar towers and listening posts do have radar, so they're especially susceptible to ARMs.

Cybrid Buildings and Their Weak Points

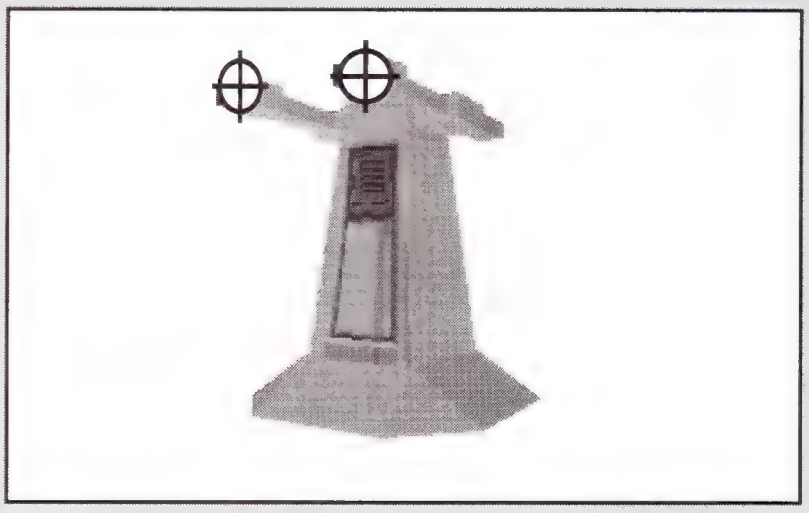


Factory

⊕ indicates weak point

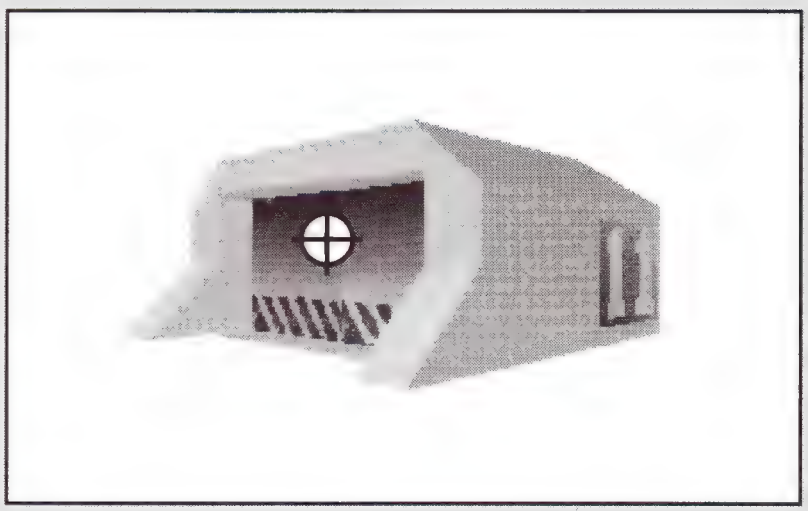
Generator

⊕ indicates weak point



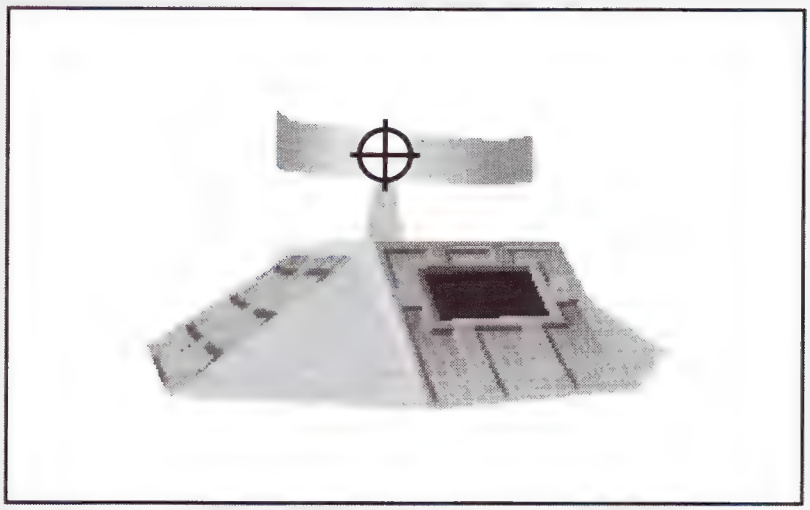
Gun Tower

⊕ indicates weak point



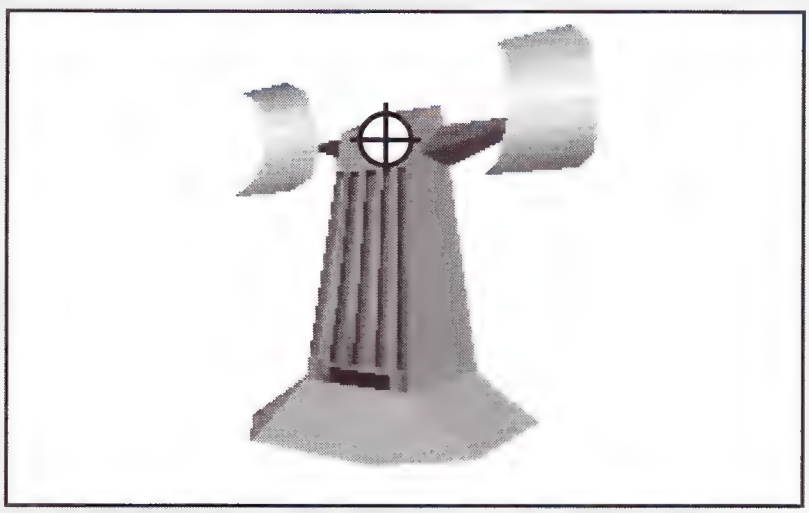
Hangar

⊕ indicates weak point



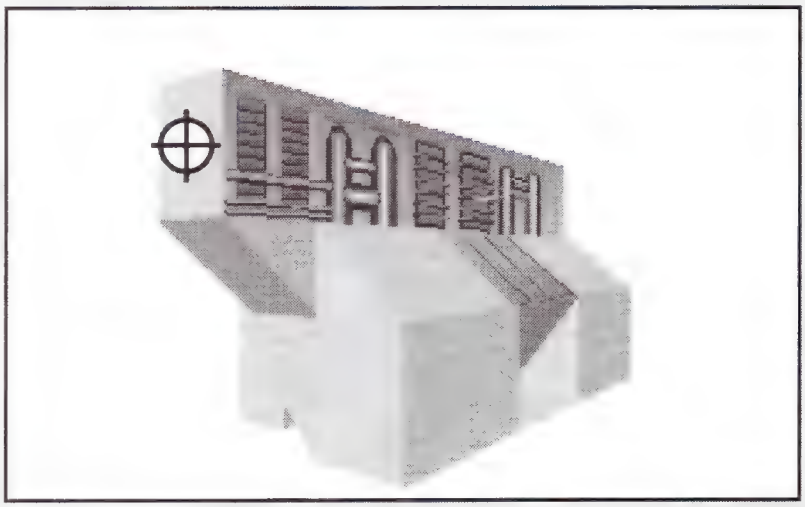
Listening Post

⊕ indicates weak point



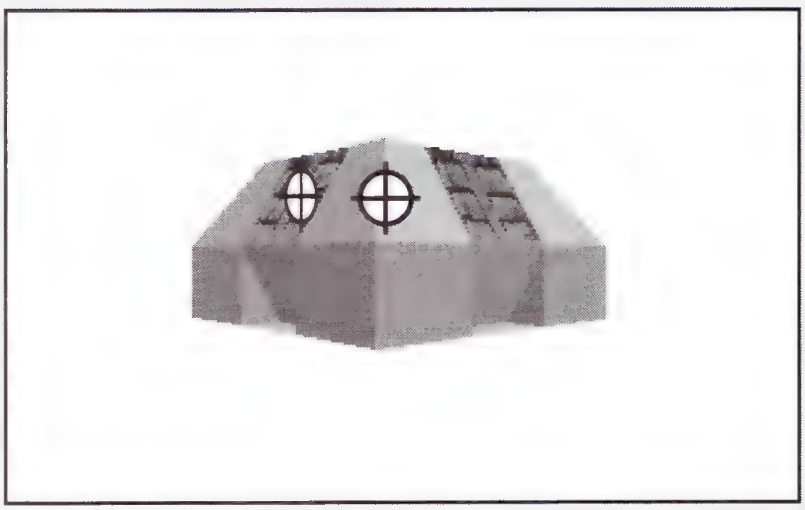
Radar

⊕ indicates weak point



Refinery

⊕ indicates weak point



Supply Depot

⊕ indicates weak point

Part III
The EarthSiege

Playing through the entire EarthSiege simulation involves many more missions than are described below. These are all the major ones, each with a map, some goals, and a historical document that provides background and strategy.

How to Go through the Campaigns

Each campaign has a critical battle at the end, and your performance determines which campaign you proceed to next. If you are in an offensive campaign and achieve your goals, you will be sent to an offensive campaign in the next sector. If you fail but survive, you will be shipped to the same sector, but face a more defensive set of options. If you are playing a defensive campaign and succeed in the final mission, you will go an offensive campaign in the next sector. If you fail in this defensive campaign, the war is lost and the simulation's over.

Note that there is only one campaign in Alpha sector (since it's the first) and succeeding in either Gamma campaign (the fourth) will send you to the final campaign — still in Gamma. If you fail, even in the first Gamma offensive campaign, the war is lost.

"Above All Else"

Occasionally you will have multiple goals. Obviously, you should try to stay alive, but sometimes meeting your goals is secondary to keeping your equipment intact. This is what "stay alive" means. For most missions not covered in this book, keeping your body and HERC in one piece should be considered your default goal.

Alpha Sector: *(One Campaign Only)*

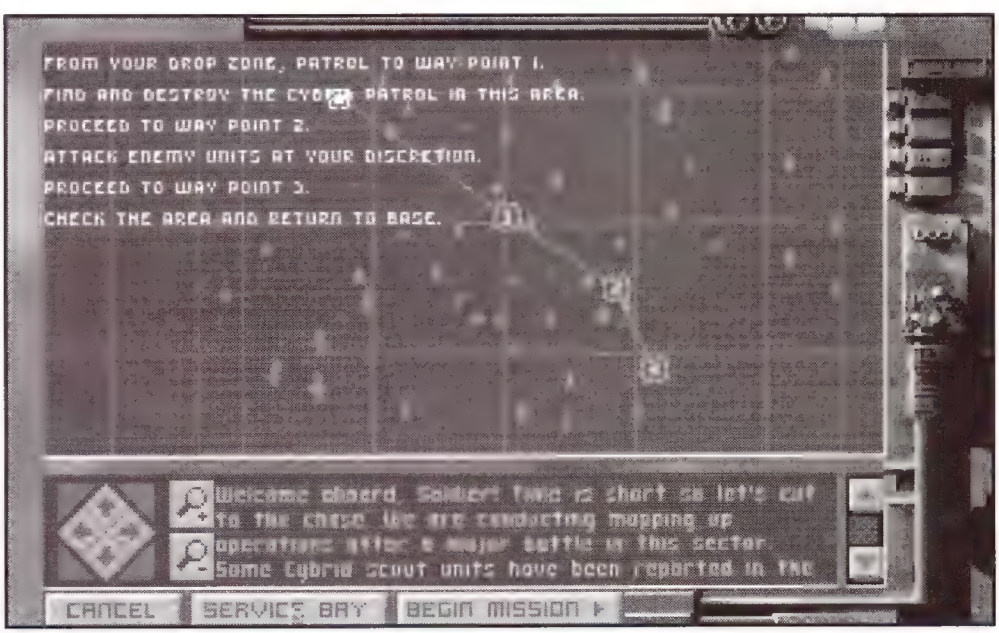
Background: The human resistance began where much of the HERC technology was developed, in the ruins of North America, somewhere in the radioactive garden formerly known as the Great Plains. General Gierling, the commander-in-chief of the resistance, is personally overseeing the missions. After years of covert organization, the resistance needs its first official campaign or all of the built-up momentum toward humanity's survival will be lost.

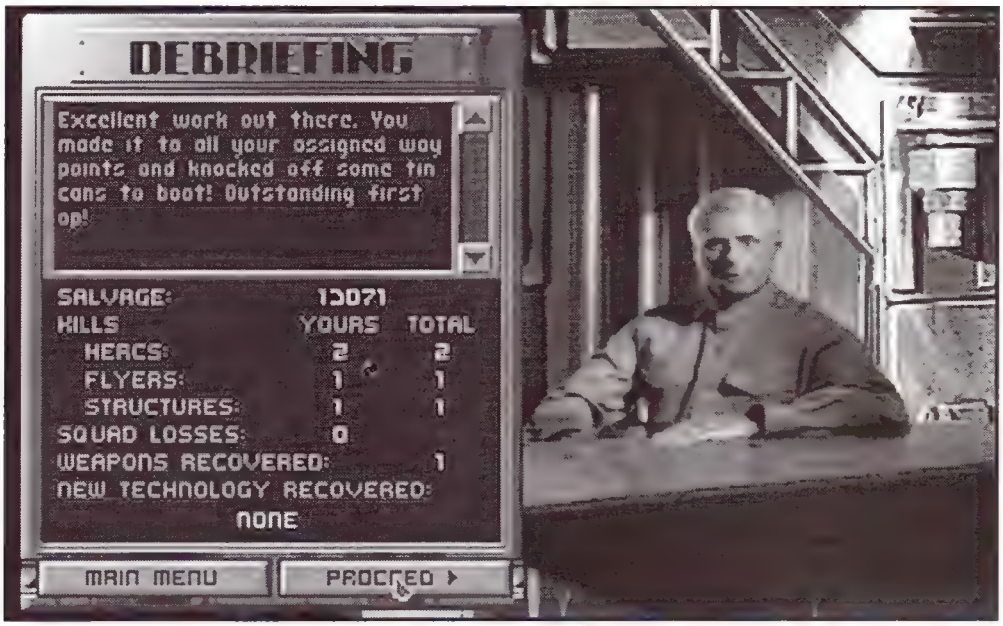
Opponents: Expect to face Stingrays, Mongooses, Arachnitrons, and Buzzards.

Major Mission 1

Mission Type: **Patrol**

Above All Else: **Stay alive**


FROM YOUR DROP ZONE, PATROL TO WAY POINT 1.
FIND AND DESTROY THE CYCLOPS PATROL IN THIS AREA.
PROCEED TO WAY POINT 2.
ATTACK ENEMY UNITS AT YOUR DISCRETION.
PROCEED TO WAY POINT 3.
CHECK THE AREA AND RETURN TO BASE.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION


DEBRIEFING
Excellent work out there. You made it to all your assigned way points and knocked off some tin cans to boot! Outstanding first op!
SALVAGE: 13071
KILLS YOURS TOTAL
HERCS: 2 2
FLYERS: 1 1
STRUCTURES: 1 1
SQUAD LOSSES: 0
WEAPONS RECOVERED: 1
NEW TECHNOLOGY RECOVERED:
NONE
MAIN MENU
PROCEED

Private message from General Gierling, entered in pilot's computer

Identification
General Gierling

This mission's strictly textbook. I'm putting this in writing to ensure your success. We ran dozens of similar missions in the earliest days of the war. Even though resistance shouldn't be too heavy, that's no reason to be stupid.

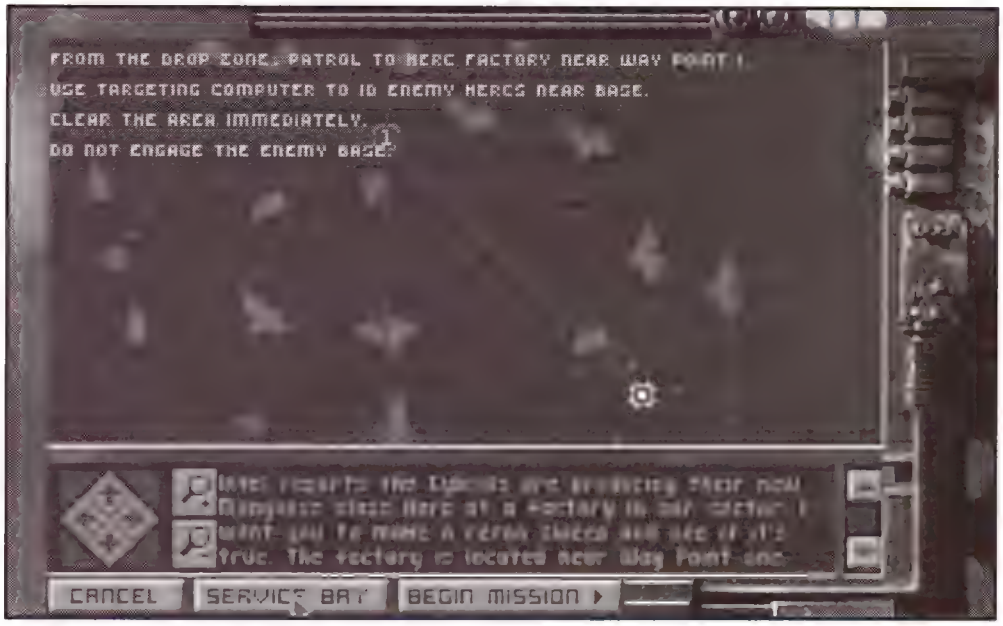
Stick to the basics. I strongly advise a Roadrunner with two 20mm cannons and a 300gw laser on top. This way, you can keep the radar passive at all times.

Remember the basics, and that means keeping the tracking off unless there are no land-based HERCs in range.

Major Mission 2

Mission Type: Recon

Above All Else: Do not engage the base


FROM THE DROP ZONE, PATROL TO NERC FACTORY NEAR WAY POINT 1.
USE TARGETING COMPUTER TO ID ENEMY NERCS NEAR BASE.
CLEAR THE AREA IMMEDIATELY.
DO NOT ENGAGE THE ENEMY BASE.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the onboard log of 1st Lieutenant O'Neil

The commanders have lied to me again. Probably for my own good, but those "simulated" battle films I saw were the real thing.

They've kept me ignorant, even bringing meals to my quarters rather than letting me eat in the mess. That way I'll never find out who died last time.

Whoever it was seemed to know what he was doing. Tried to take the long way around the base, but the spiders were on him too fast. Backing away shooting is the only way to take them out with a minimum of casualties.

From the onboard log of 1st Lieutenant O'Neil, continued

but it was also the best way to let the horde gang up on him. All of those missiles...

There, I've been dropped. Roadrunner, 300gw, and two 20mm cannons all linked together. Radar on passive, tracking off, prayers said, mission goal remembered:

Do not engage the base.

Fine, so I'll sweep to the left and check out the base from the side.

It looks like a Mongoose. I know it's seen me, but it's turning away — heading back toward the base.

This makes no sense. Why didn't they command me?

Do not engage the base.

Maybe the can needs to tell its buddies in person that I'm coming.

Do not engage the base.

Forget it, I'm going in, full power to forward shields, all weapons blasting away.

Yes! No, it's still moving and here come the spiders!

Take it easy and dance. I'm faster, so if I can just keep up the speed...

Waypoint reached and here are the Cybrids. What have I done?

Towers, flyers, and Cybrids, oh my! Wish the lousy targeting computer switched targets faster.

There! It's read the mission target — time to go. All power to rear shields, terrain map on the screen.

Those are missiles pounding my backside. No! There go the weapons, but if I can just make it to that alley between the boulders...

Did it! Radar's showing the HERCs are dropping behind.

Onboard Log *From the onboard log of 1st Lieutenant O'Neil, continued*

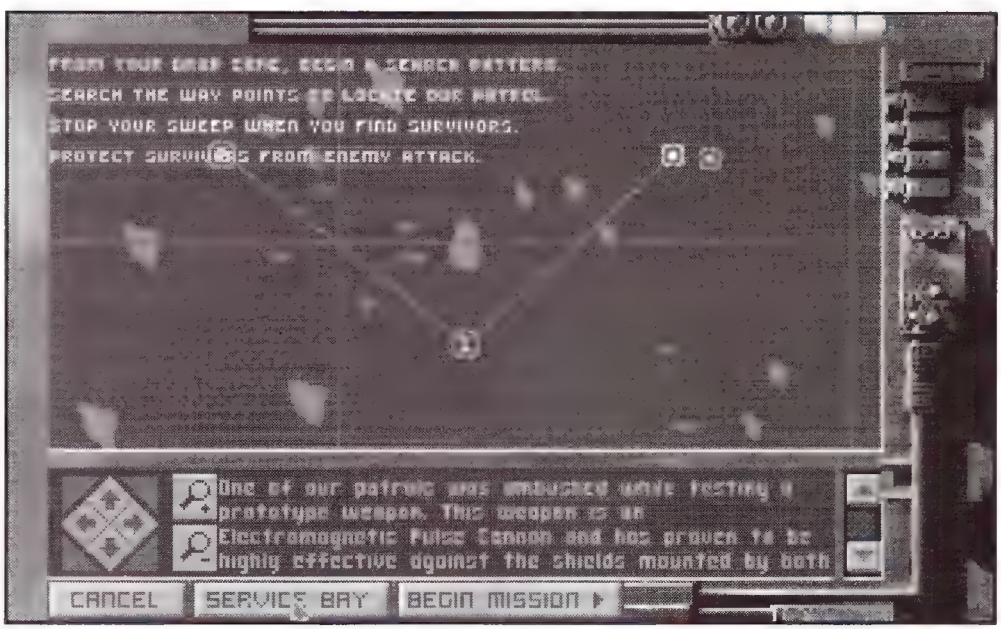
only a Buzzard's after me now. I can hear its guns slowly stripping away what's left of my armor, but I'll make it.

I can also hear Gut complaining.

Major Mission 3

Mission Type: Search and Rescue

Above All Else: Don't let the pilot get killed



Official mission log of Captain Polonsky

Some people said that the only thing worse than being caught in the Cybrid holocaust was surviving it. Perhaps worse than either, though, is being stuck in a disabled HERC armed with a prototype weapon more valuable to the CO than your own life.

Out comes the rescue squad armed with a full assortment of orders and waypoints. They briefed me beforehand that this would happen if I went down. My communications equipment is down and the windows are completely covered with debris, but the computer seems to be working. Besides, I know the drill: Send them around in circles until they manage to find me. The problem with standard radar procedure is that it's developed entirely around the concept of self-preservation. Running around screaming, "Yoo-hoo, where are you, Cybrids?" is not a really good idea.

But if the Cybrids are gunning for sitting ducks, the rescue team is stuck with the quaint dilemma of whose life is more important — mine or their own. Having had some firsthand experience in both roles, I'm going to make the following suggestions to Gierling:

1.Until the crippled HERC is found, the "guard" HERCs' radar should be active.

2.Once the crippled HERC is found, all HERCs should turn their radars passive until the first Cybrid appears. From that point onward, HERCs near the cripple should have active radar when enemies are in radar range, passive

Official mission log of Captain Polonsky, continued

otherwise. Knowledge of the enemy's presence (gained through active radar) is much less useful than radar as a form of distraction.

The orphan regulations forbid us from ever learning each other's identities, but I want to commend the two sent to rescue me for their teamwork. In between Cybrid attacks, they circled me — one close and the other one a bit farther out. As if radar wasn't enough of a dilemma, there's a much tougher decision — selecting between airborne and ground-based attackers. Taking out aerial attackers generally requires foe-free ground space and tracking, but for my private record I want it noted that I didn't soil my uniform until I started getting hit with bullets from above while my rescuers dealt with ground-based hassles. It's a good policy — unless the Cybrid HERCs on the ground have lost their most effective weapons or are far away from the disabled human HERC.

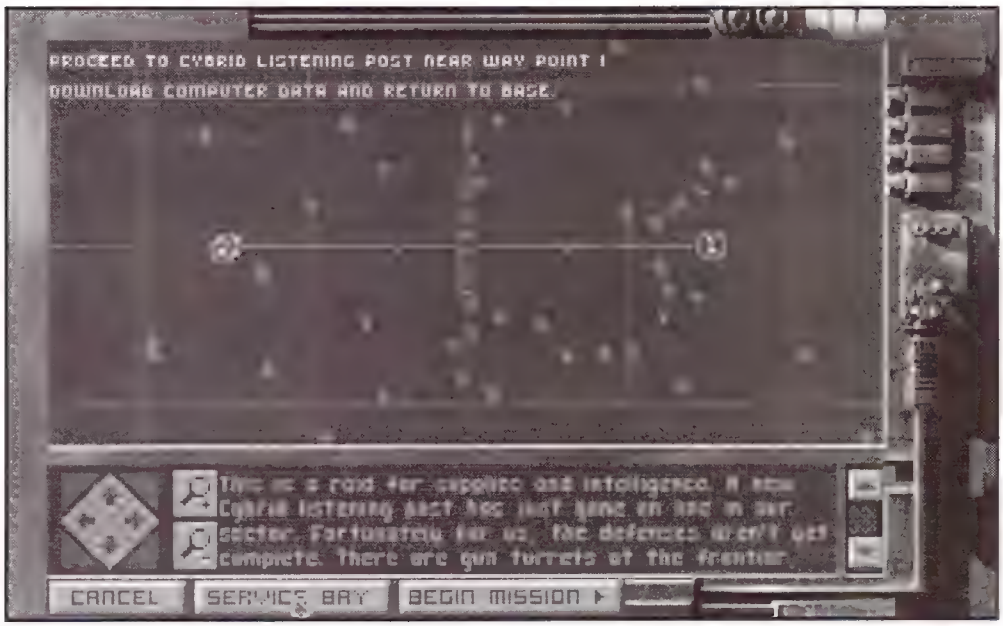
In my report, I'll suggest that when more than one HERC is working the rescue, one of them be equipped with a rack of missiles — still the best way to take out Buzzards.

Pursuit beyond a few hundred meters is stupid. The Cybrids' far greater numbers almost guarantee that a replacement will have already killed the disabled human by the time the errant rescuer has collected his additional kill and all of the salvage with it.

Major Mission 4

Mission Type: Raid

Above All Else: Download the information


PROCEED TO CYBRID LISTENING POST NEAR WAY POINT 1
DOWNLOAD COMPUTER DATA AND RETURN TO BASE.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Message from General Gierling, 10:00 hours

Item final: Last night I spoke with Capt. Morris Hall, who apparently has been renamed Monty in light of his recent success. He's an old friend of mine. He's also a lot tougher than I am, so think twice before you put in your request to be transferred to his squad.

For those who haven't been infected with salvage-lust or haven't been studying the daily reports, here are the basics from this textbook-quality mission: Small HERCs with

Message from General Gierling, 10:00 hours, continued

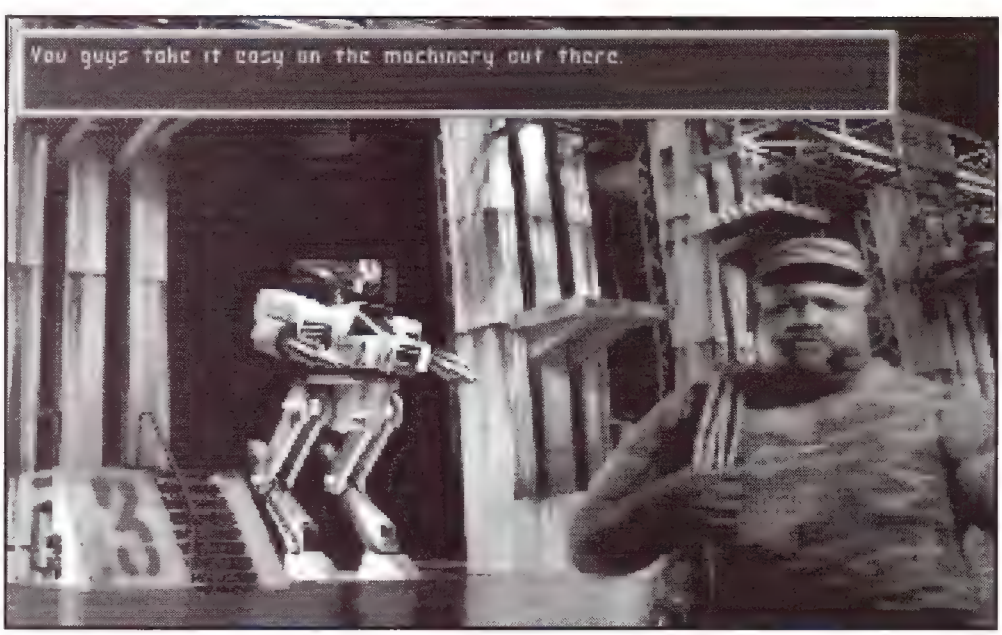
big guns bypass the line of towers altogether — this time heading north, spending the time and ammo to take out any Buzzards.

Upon dispatching the ground resistance and downloading all of the relevant data, they destroy everything. In this case, Capt. Hall blew open a warehouse, liberating the tons of armor and parts that you've been all been squawking about like sick baby birds. Sign on with him, and you'll have all the armor you need to protect you from the Cybrids — but mess up once, and you'll find yourself preferring the enemy to your squad leader.

Major Mission 5

Mission Type: Recon

Above All Else: Do not engage the base



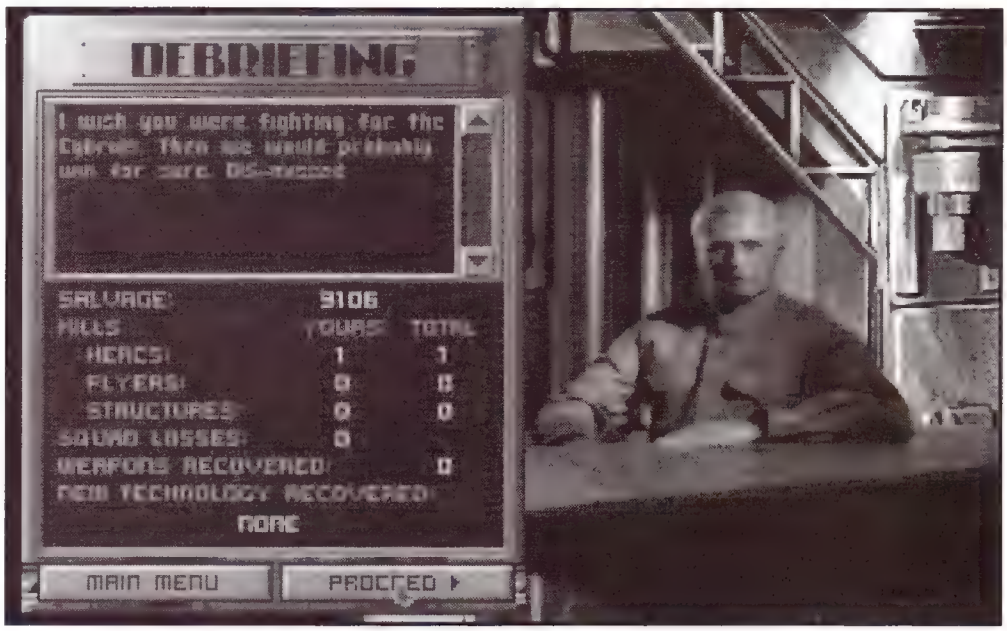
FROM YOUR DROP ZONE, PROCEED TO WAY POINT 1.
SCOUT THE CYBRID BASE AND CLEAR THE AREA:
DO NOT ENGAGE THE BASE:
We think there is a major Cybrid refinery
somewhere in this sector. I want to you take a
light Hero and scout the area. You will be solo on
this mission. If you locate the base, don't try to
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the log of General Gierling, with his permission

Identification
General Gierling

I'm beginning to believe that stress may kill me long before the tin cans come even close to dissecting this General's brain. I don't understand why today was so difficult. The least possible damage was done, but I still feel queasy.

It was a simple Recon mission. Advance intelligence indicated that the defenses weren't too great. It should have been easy: run in, let the targeting computer suck in its surroundings, and run out.



From the log of General Gierling, with his permission, continued

Corporal Williams decided that he should take a Gunslinger armed with a pair of 35mms and an ECM. His reasoning was that if the enemy got a bead on him at all, their missiles would pose the greatest risk. He also preferred the continuous firing action of the 35mm guns to lasers. Prolonged fights weren't an issue because he knew that if he got into one, he'd lose no matter what.

Superficially sensible arguments — only real dumb. Bullets have problems too — including susceptibility to

From the log of General Gierling, with his permission, continued

electromagnetic shields — shields which called for an EMP far more than an ECM.

Watching the video, I can almost hear the Cybrids laughing as he tried vainly to fight them. It was a beautiful sight, though, watching Williams escape through the maze of buildings and terrains — something nobody else could have done successfully, but the recruits will never see the film lest they get the wrong idea.

Williams came out of the mission looking like a peeled orange, but his HERC was surprisingly functional. The first thing he said at the debriefing was "I resign."

Nobody died, he did scout the base, and most importantly, he volunteered to leave without any prompting. Odds are he'll integrate back into the survivors much better with no casualties or great failures on his mind. It wasn't such a disaster. Everything was "correct."

Why do I feel so bad?

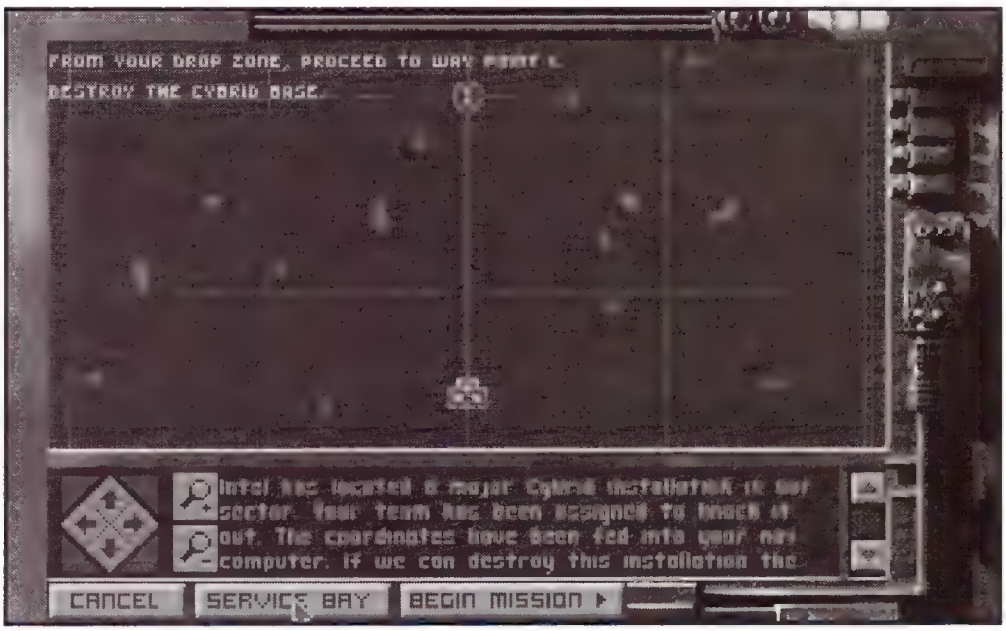
Because a tightening of the "pilot's choice" rules, seen as essential to affirming our humanity and morale, could have saved this mission along with the career and spirit of an otherwise brilliant pilot.

I still feel rotten.

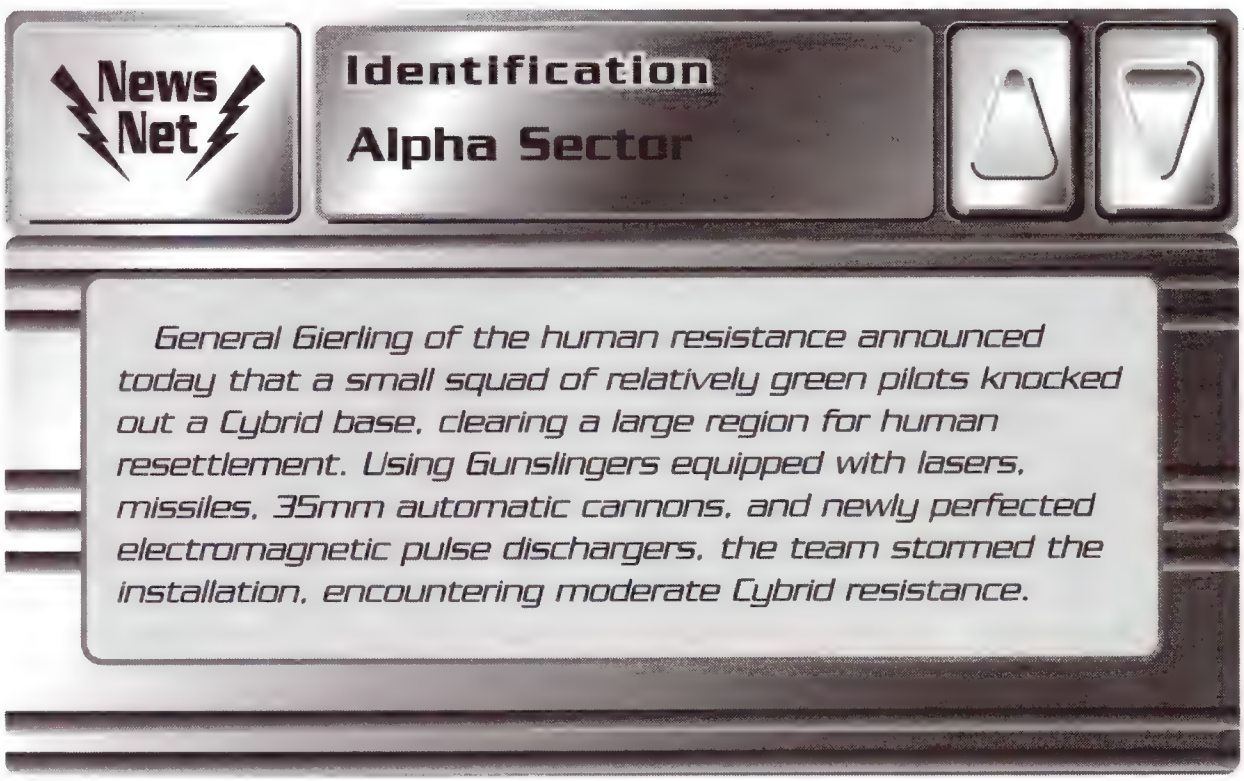
Major Mission 6

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the main Cybrid buildings



Newsnet Oct. 28 — Alpha Sector — Cleared for release at 02:00 hours


News Net
Identification
Alpha Sector
General Gierling of the human resistance announced today that a small squad of relatively green pilots knocked out a Cybrid base, clearing a large region for human resettlement. Using Gunslingers equipped with lasers, missiles, 35mm automatic cannons, and newly perfected electromagnetic pulse dischargers, the team stormed the installation, encountering moderate Cybrid resistance.

News Net *Newsnet Oct. 28 — Alpha Sector, continued*

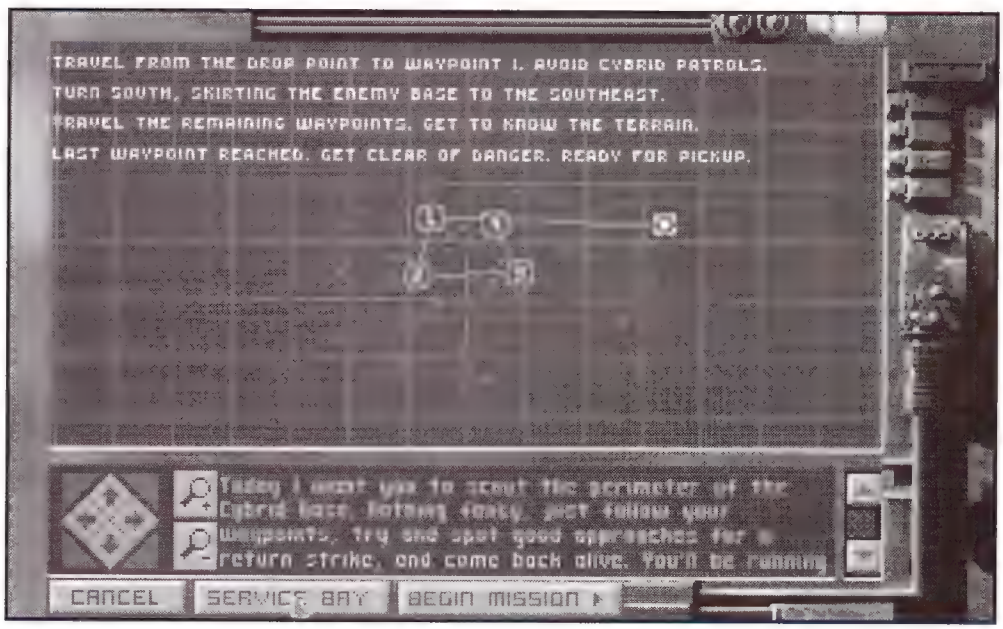
"It was great," said the team leader, whose name, like the rest of the squad's, will remain secret until the Cybrids are finally defeated on Earth. "We had a simple goal and no restraints. Generally, on a mission, we have to conserve ammo so we don't get caught defenseless along the latter waypoints. But here it was simply a chance to use everything we had to reduce the tin cans' home to scrap."

Delta Sector: Offensive Campaign

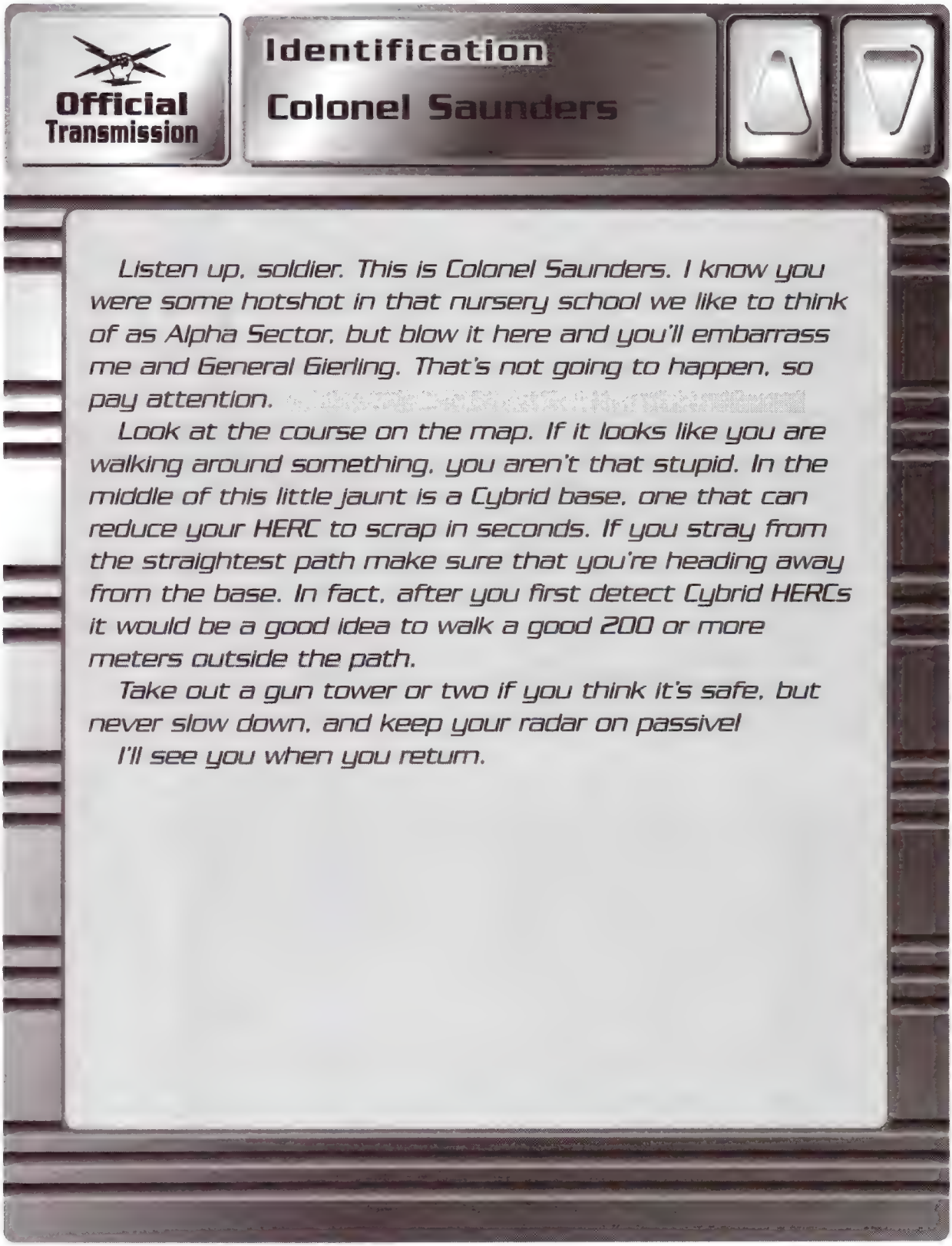
Major Mission 1

Mission Type: Scout

Above All Else: Stay alive


TRAVEL FROM THE DROP POINT TO WAYPOINT 1. AVOID CYBRID PATROLS.
TURN SOUTH, SKIRTING THE ENEMY BASE TO THE SOUTHEAST.
TRAVEL THE REMAINING WAYPOINTS. GET TO KNOW THE TERRAIN.
LAST WAYPOINT REACHED. GET CLEAR OF DANGER. READY FOR PICKUP.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Official transmission from Colonel Saunders



Listen up, soldier. This is Colonel Saunders. I know you were some hotshot in that nursery school we like to think of as Alpha Sector, but blow it here and you'll embarrass me and General Gierling. That's not going to happen, so pay attention.

Look at the course on the map. If it looks like you are walking around something, you aren't that stupid. In the middle of this little jaunt is a Cybrid base, one that can reduce your HERC to scrap in seconds. If you stray from the straightest path make sure that you're heading away from the base. In fact, after you first detect Cybrid HERCs it would be a good idea to walk a good 200 or more meters outside the path.

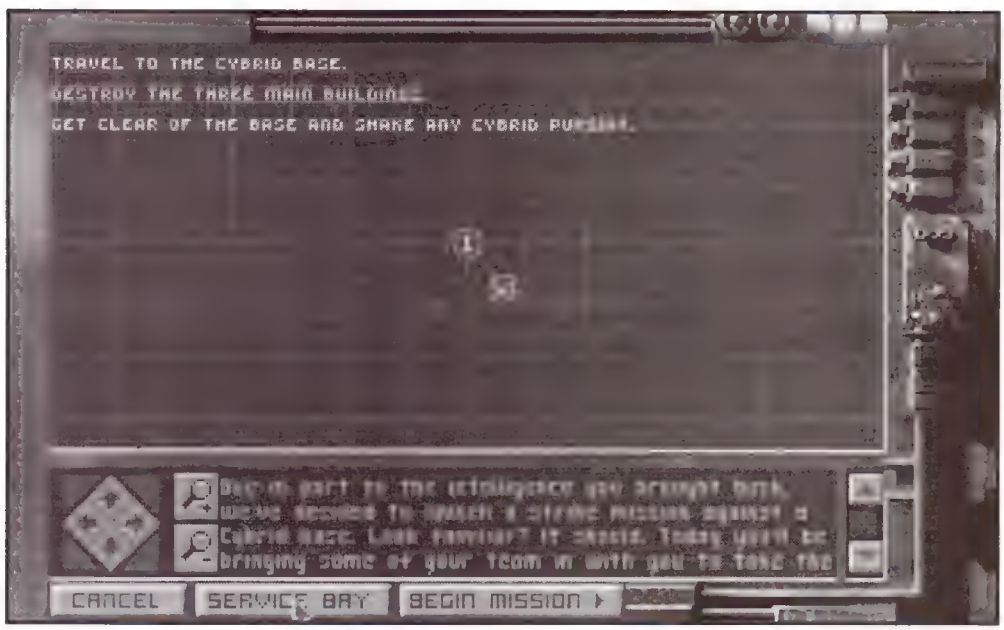
Take out a gun tower or two if you think it's safe, but never slow down, and keep your radar on passive!

I'll see you when you return.

Major Mission 2

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Take out the Cybrid buildings


TRAVEL TO THE CYBRID BASE.
DESTROY THE THREE MAIN BUILDINGS.
GET CLEAR OF THE BASE AND SHAKE ANY CYBRID PURSUIT.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Patient: Pilot John Dill.
Profile by Dr. A. Ahmonson, human resistance

Identification
Dr. A. Ahmonson

Patient was originally brought to my attention when he was rescued from the field, the only survivor of a mission gone so wrong that I've had to issue orders keeping Col. Saunders from the patient, delaying the debriefing until both of them are a bit more stable.

Patient was the assigned leader of a three-HERC strike team sent in to take out a Cybrid base — something that should have been a simple mission. I haven't seen the battle recordings yet, but apparently the group was overrun by Arachnitron attackers and did not respond properly.

This I've gathered from the patient, who was pulled from his HERC screaming about spiders and flailing madly. Only with restraints and heavy tranquilizers were we able to keep the patient from clawing off his own flesh during his spider hallucinations. After the first 24 hours of heavy sedation, the patient awoke and began exhibiting behavior that was less self-destructive. He was running around the room spinning all his limbs in different directions. Observations of similar shell-shocked patients indicate that he is simulating the movements of the HERC, trying to master separate control of both the head and arms (representing the weapons systems) and the legs. Conflict between the two forms of motion is exacerbated by an occasional lack of control of the upper torso, which we believe simulates auto-tracking.

The mission will be attempted again today. Saunders

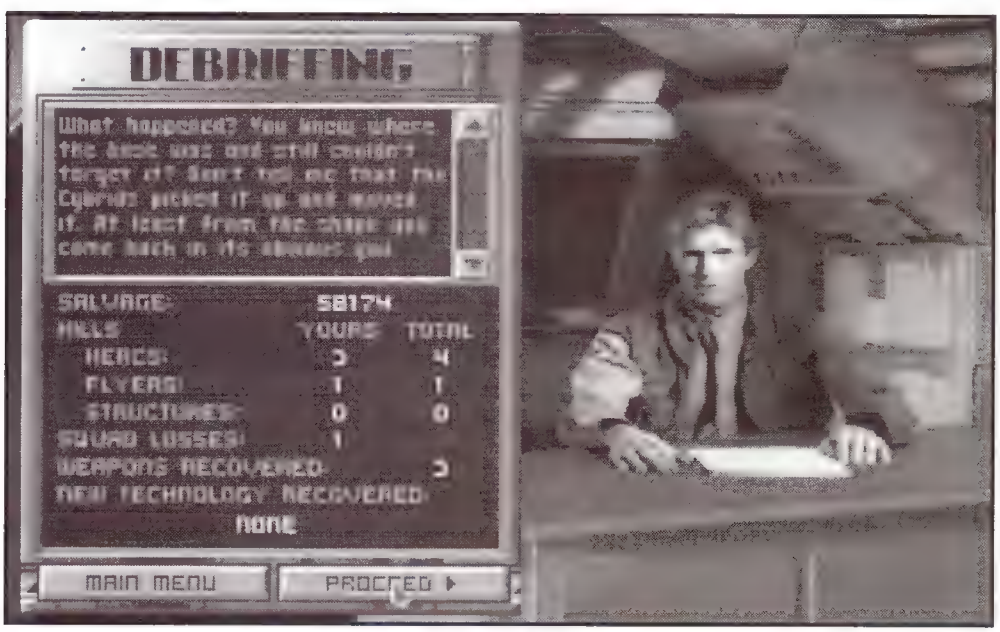
Profile by Dr. A. Ahmonson, continued

has ordered the new squad leader to come look in on the patient. Who knows if the Cybrids will even keep the heavy Arachnitron defense of the base, but Saunders feels that the patient will serve as a rare living reminder of what happens when a pilot loses track of the goals and the importance of never slowing down when facing such resistance.

Major Mission 3

Mission Type: Recon

Above All Else: Identify but do not attack radar base



Memo posted in Delta Base pilots' lounge at 08:00

MEMO

Identification
Colonel Saunders

Wanted: *Leader for Recon mission.*

Target is potential manufacturer of particle beam weaponry. We need to get a quick look around before staging a raid. High visibility allows for easy targeting a long way from the actual base. Expect Ramses-class resistance with PBWs, and be ready to survive without ECMs or even missiles.

By the same token, this is going to require some restraint. If you take out that base, I will personally make you scour battlefields looking for a PBW blown off a Cybrid — in your underwear.

Whoever volunteers will be entitled to a real egg breakfast and will be overlooked the next time nobody responds to one of these little requests and I have to generate some enthusiasm the hard way.

This had better not still be up here by 8:30.

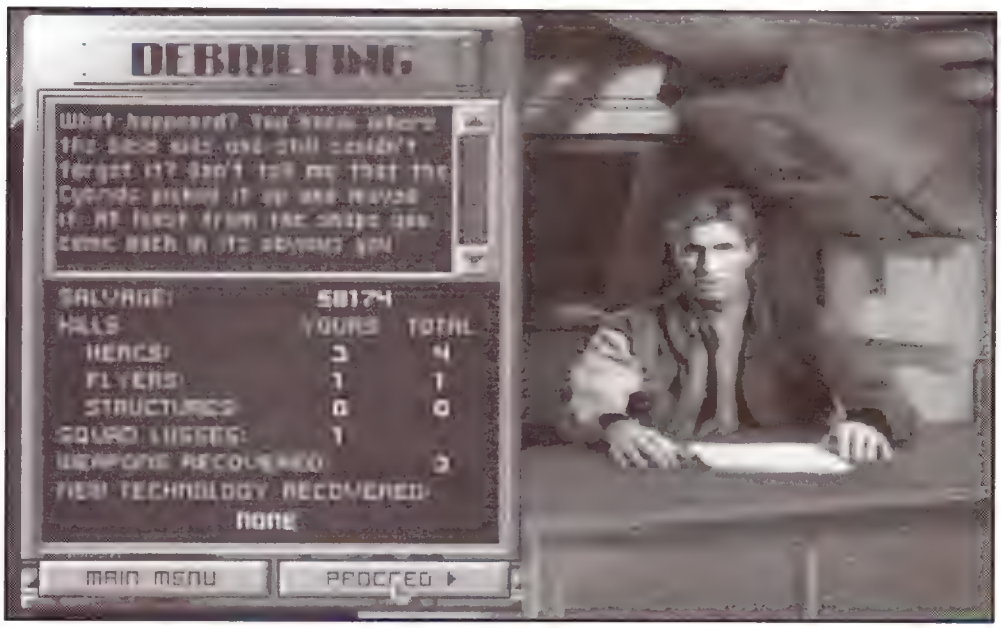
Good morning.

Col. Saunders

Major Mission 4

Mission Type: Raid

Above All Else: Download PBW specs



From the private log of Major Lunicus

Private Log

Identification

Major Lunicus

I never thought I'd see Saunders chew someone out with such lack of zeal. Perhaps he is a bit human after all. Surely he must have realized most of the mistakes weren't Samuelson's fault.

First of all, that volunteer, Loggins, acted like a complete idiot on the previous mission, getting too close to the base and then taking out half the compound while dispatching the guards, so half the Cybrids in this sector were on first

From the private log of Major Lunicus, continued

alert to begin with.

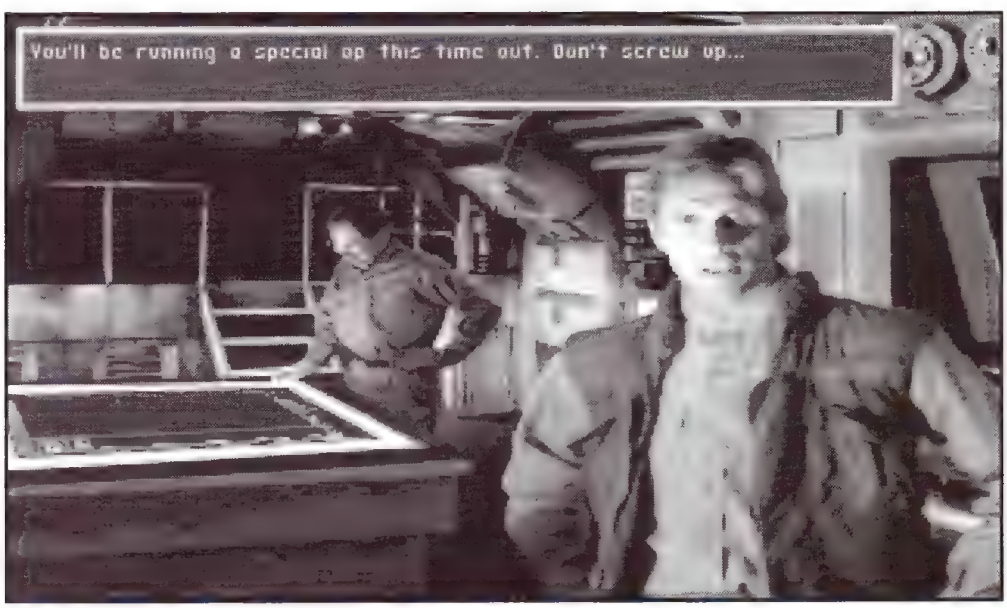
If Samuelson does have any faults, it's not as a pilot, but as a leader. The Ramses units that picked a fight with them led them into a minor Cybrid installation.

Our pilots finished them off relatively quickly, but, apparently counting on some backup with the Buzzards, Samuelson never gave the disengage order to Anders, who decided to polish off the buildings around him before obeying the "Join on me." Soon enough, reinforcements killed Anders and, after the Buzzards took out Samuelson's legs, he dealt with the next wave of Ramses — solo. Is it any wonder he didn't make it to his final destination?

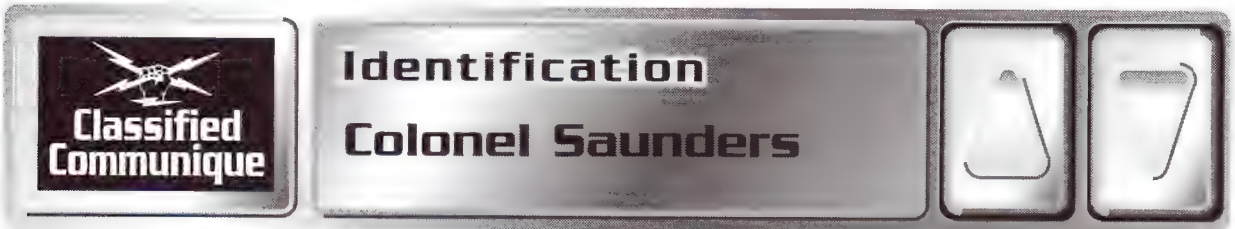
Major Mission 5

Mission Type: Special Ops

Above All Else: Destroy Cybrid Mirimacs



Classified communique from Colonel Saunders



TO: *HDF Command*
FM: *Col. Saunders*

On the advice of my support staff, I have waited 24 hours before writing this memo, lest I commit an even greater breach of protocol in choosing my language.

Now to the point. Who was the idiot who sent down these orders? From everything I've read and observed firsthand about this mission, the destruction of these two Mirimac prototypes is more important than any mission the HDF has run in this sector to date. So did some genius pull out a map and start playing connect-the-dots with waypoints? Sure, every croaked tin can helps the war effort, and we all know how much can be achieved by taking out a few Cybrid buildings. These additional possibilities were no doubt pointed out to any pilots stupid enough to think they could handle all sorts of extraneous combat and then take out two new HERCs of unknown type.

"Unknown" is a euphemism for "more powerful." The planet's littered with bases and low-grade Cybrids, so delaying the mass production of the new Mirimac seems to take priority. As even the most novice soldier knows, this war is unlike any ever fought. Human existence is at stake, so commanders have to inspire pilots with belief in human strengths — such as improvisation — while reminding them that a loose cannon is worse than an enemy HERC. Saving humanity sounds like an impressive goal, but after five minutes on the battlefield, it's real easy

Classified Communique

Classified communique from Colonel Saunders, continued

to think that our defeat is inevitable and it's better to die with as much self-deluding glory as possible.

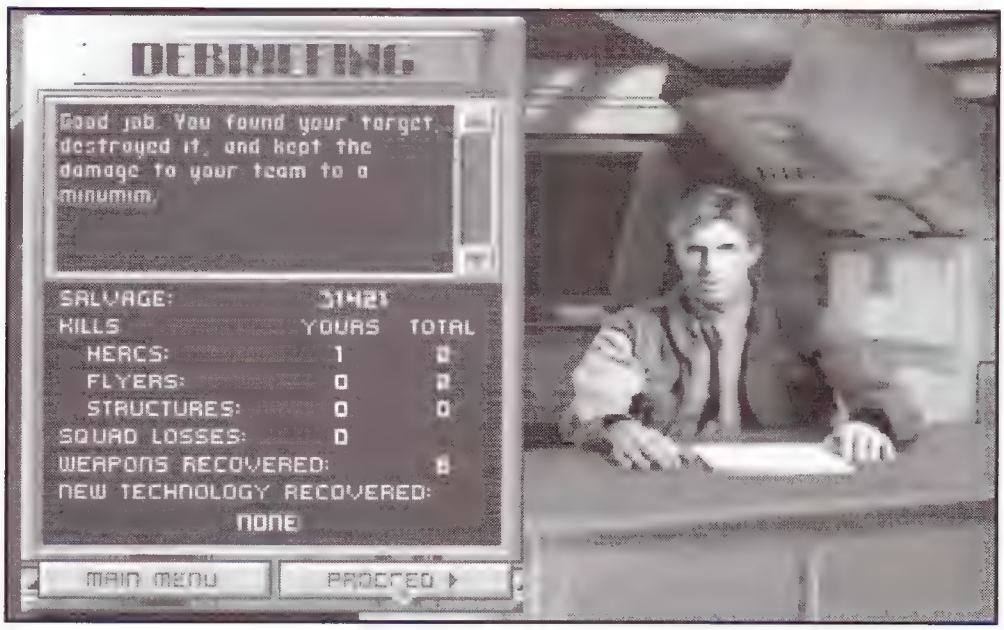
Fortunately, our pilots knew better. Unsure of the Mirimacs' armaments, they knew to avoid active radar in combat situations and armed themselves with non-missile weapons. With forward shields at near-maximum levels, they headed directly toward the southern edge of the mission map. A few blinks of active radar located the Mirimacs and then they fired everything they had.

Did I mention that they almost lost a HERC? Imagine what would have happened if they'd already seen action that day.

Major Mission 6

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Take out Cybrid structures



Electronic press release

News Net

Identification

Captain L. Orkin

Document: *159e, draft 1*
For general release re: Delta Sector victory

"I've been told by my staff not to use the word blitz," Col. Saunders said today in announcing his command's latest victory, "but there's no word in military history to better explain what went down."

"A two-man squad composed of Tomahawks armed with autocannons, particle beam weapons, and lasers plowed through the Cybrid resistance by concentrating their firepower. They worked brilliantly with their HERCs' special

News Net *Electronic press release, continued*

targeting controls. After taking out the two Ramses, they just kept running toward the base — blasting the buildings exclusively, as ordered.

"By the time tin can reinforcements arrived, we were finished. Delta's crack air team was ready to supply the rescue, sweeping our HERCs out of there with plenty of time to grab some salvage. They're not going to be building more Mirimacs any time soon."

While HDF was not releasing the names of the pilots responsible, they did say that the squad would be transferred to Bravo Sector.

— Cpl. L. Orkin, Delta Sector

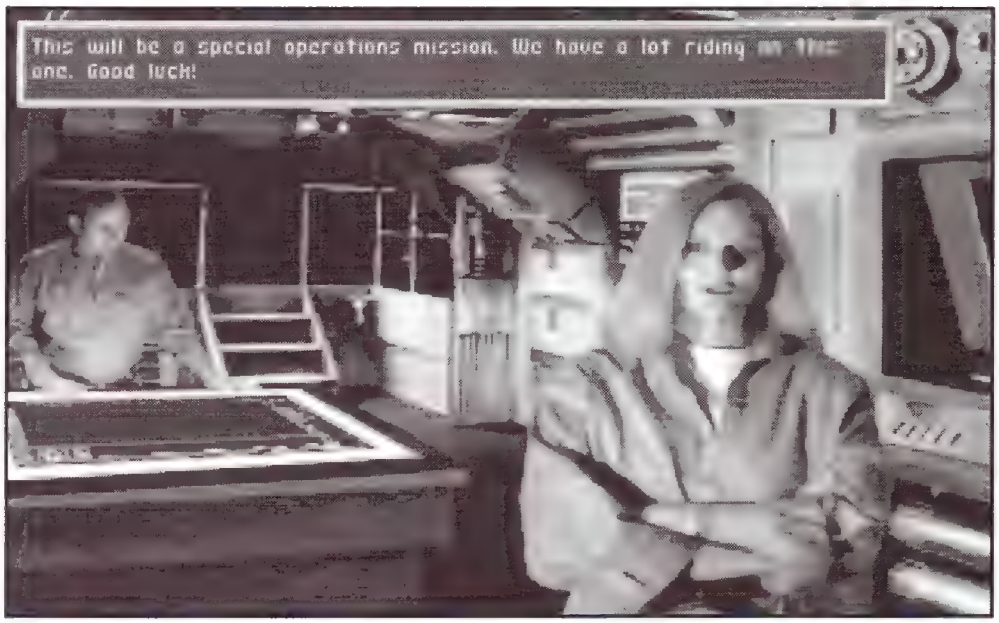
I like it. Arrogant but funny. Let's pray those bums listen to orders and we can use this one instead of the failure release.

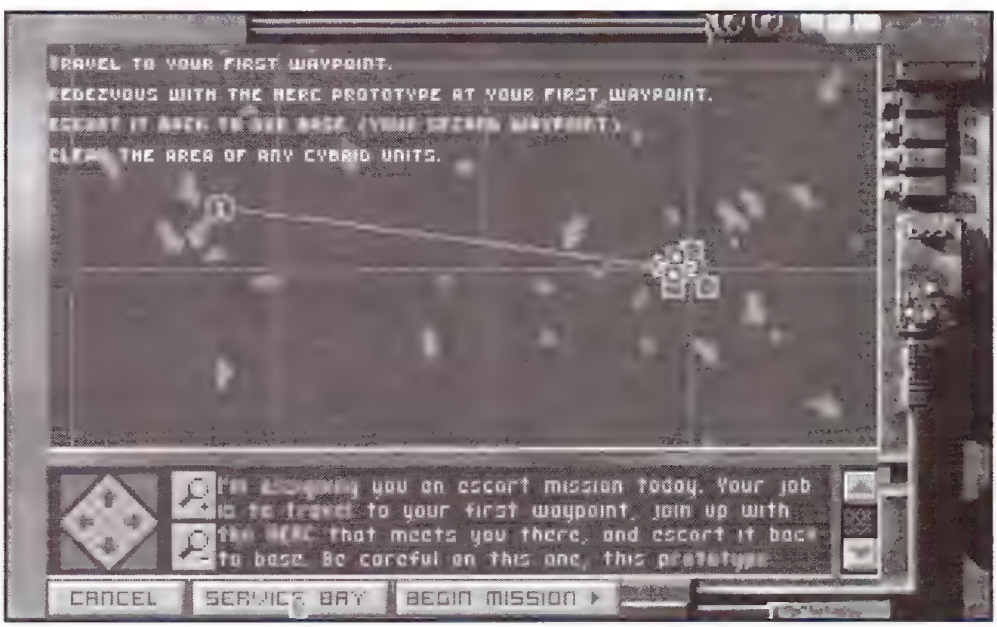
Delta Sector: Defensive Campaign

Major Mission 1

Mission Type: Escort

Above All Else: Protect Tomahawk prototype




TRAVEL TO YOUR FIRST WAYPOINT.
RENDEZVOUS WITH THE HERC PROTOTYPE AT YOUR FIRST WAYPOINT.
CLEAR THE AREA OF ANY CYBRID UNITS.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the onboard log of Colonel Stepanovna

Onboard Log

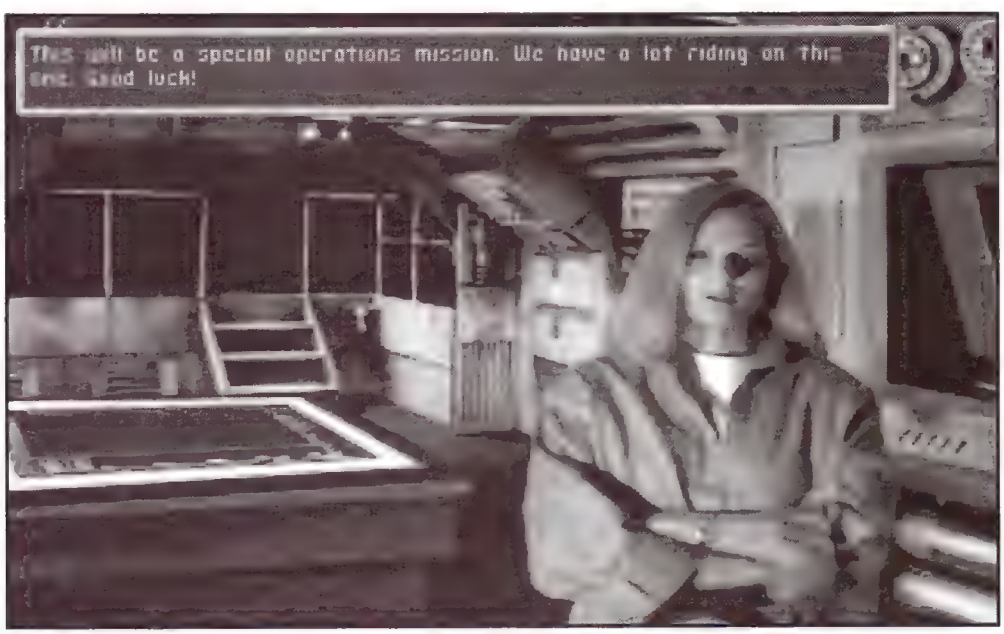
Identification

Colonel Stepanovna

It's bad enough that Col. Saunders is calling me a nanny, then Gierling sends one of his rejects. They say there might be hope, so if there's anything worthwhile in you, we're going to find out.

This first mission offers a chance to make up for some of the damage you caused in Alpha Sector by ensuring that we at least get functional Tomahawks into this sector. Now, since the Tomahawk is unarmed and unescorted, make sure that one of your HERCs gets to the first waypoint as soon as possible. Ideally, one should be sent single-mindedly, shields forward, while the others effectively guard its rear. On the way back, the toughest HERC should act as a living shield to the Tomahawk, concentrating strictly on air resistance while whatever is left of your squad works on the ground resistance.

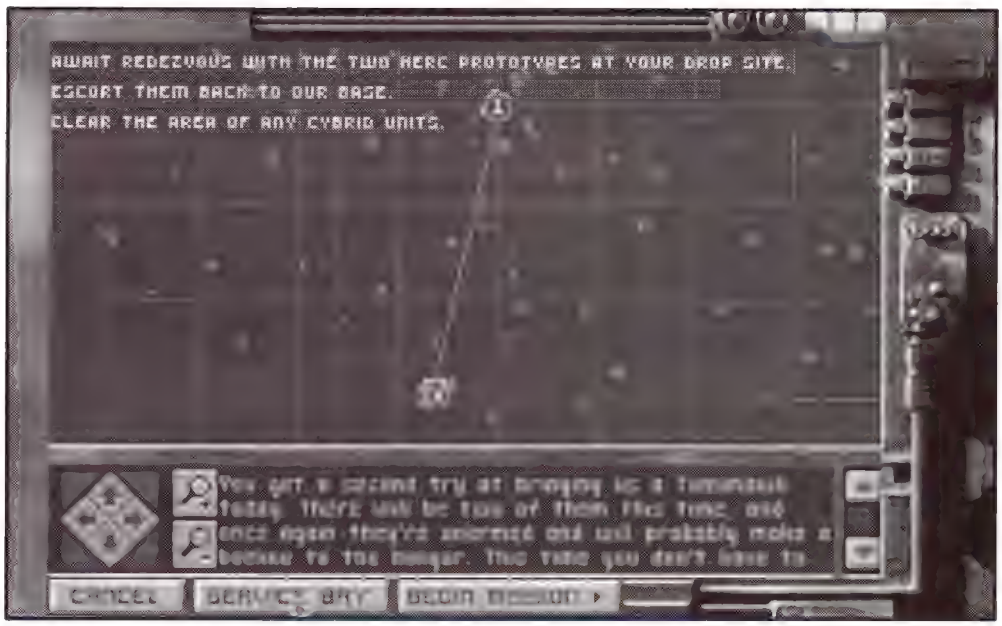
Don't let anyone die, but if that Tomahawk goes down, you're going to wish it was you.



Major Mission 2

Type: Escort

Above All Else: Protect Tomahawk prototype


AWAIT REDEZVOUS WITH THE TWO HERC PROTOTYPES AT YOUR DROP SITE.
ESCORT THEM BACK TO OUR BASE.
CLEAR THE AREA OF ANY CYBRID UNITS.

From the private log of Dr. A. Ahmonson, Delta Sector support

Identification

Dr. A. Ahmonson

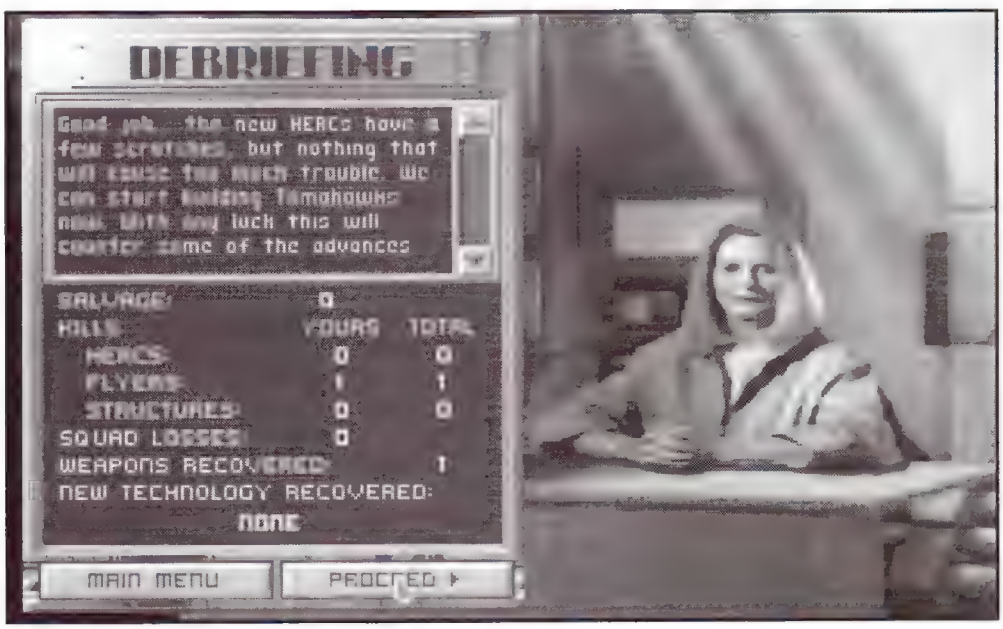
Some days, caring for the "Losers" squad isn't easy. Not only do I have to try to save these pilots from the self-destructive tendencies that hamper their considerable skills, but I have to fight my own doubts and feelings: Would it be better for us to just discharge them? Are they worth it? Shouldn't we discard them and try to find better pilots?

From the private log of Dr. A. Ahmonson, continued

That, however, is tin can thinking — my specialty is humans.

Fortunately, today was better. I never knew that it was Lt. Kyle's roommate who screwed up the first Tomahawk mission. Once he saw the prototype was gone, he just aborted the mission and, when the HERC was safe, he walked out of the base into Cybrid territory — lasted five minutes before the tin cans got him. Fortunately, this only inspired Kyle. Base commander Stepanovna managed to get two prototypes this time on a much safer route.

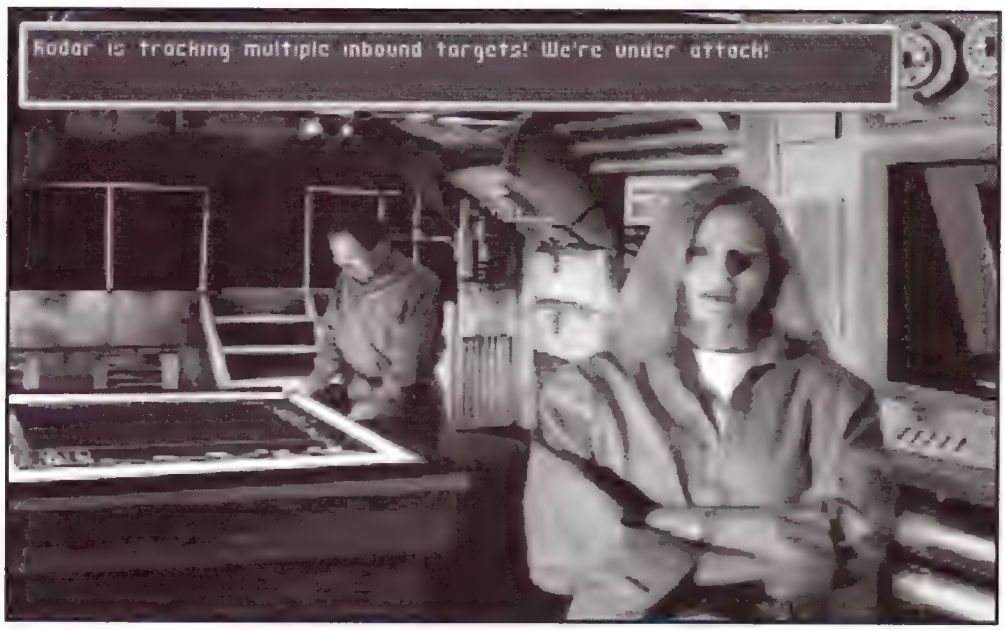
Unlike standard Escort missions, the ground resistance on this one was so light that they kept the radars passive all the way. Only Buzzards stalked them, and unlike on the last HERC escort mission, they went hungry.


DEBRIEFING
Good job... the new HERCs have a few scratches, but nothing that will cause too much trouble. We can start building Tomahawks now. With any luck this will counter some of the advances
SALVAGE: 0
KILLS: YOURS TOTAL
MECHS: 0 0
FLYERS: 1 1
STRUCTURES: 0 0
SQUAD LOSSES: 0
WEAPONS RECOVERED: 1
NEW TECHNOLOGY RECOVERED:
NONE
MAIN MENU
PROCEED

Major Mission 3

Mission Type: Scramble

Above All Else: Protect the base



Transcript of affidavit by Corporal Fitzimmons, J.

Official Transmission

Identification

Cpl. Fitzimmons, J.

General Malloy asked me to talk about the "Losers" squad in Delta for the record. Why, I'm not sure. But I do remember the first time they really proved themselves.

After bungling the first Tomahawk escort and being left out of the second attempt, they were pretty down. But when we first got word of a possible Cybrid attack, they were the first to volunteer.

It's pretty much known that command didn't want to risk the few passable pilots here for a few above-ground

Official Transmission

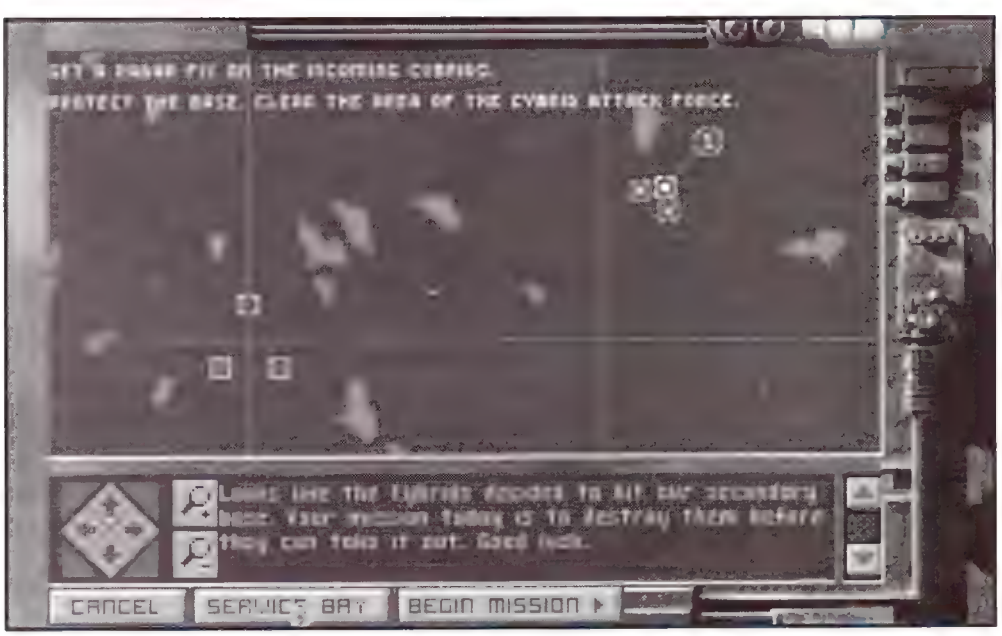
Transcript of affidavit by Corporal Fitzimmons, J., continued

buildings. The Losers had been talking about speed and the need for quick attacks. A Cybrid attack is brutal, but generally short-lived. They loaded the Raptors with an EMP, two racks of ARH missiles, and a 200gw laser. The one slob who got stuck with the Gunslinger had two 35mm ATCs and an EMP on top. I remember it because I remember one of the better pilots muttering a prayer after hearing his choice.

Radars active and energy weapons blaring, they hit the ground knowing that the outcome of this battle would be determined long before they started to worry about running out of juice.

Still not expert shots, they clipped a lot of buildings trying to chase the tin cans. But the missiles did their jobs and soon the team came back, giving me the night off — something far too rare in my corner of the war.

My job? Hosing pilots out of downed human HERCs so the scrap can be utilized properly.



Major Mission 4

Mission Type: Raid

Above All Else: Get PBW specs

From the onboard log of Lieutenant Kyle

Since this might be my last trip, I want this question answered, even only posthumously: Are they expecting me to die or are all the good pilots in this sector dead? Even after that Tomahawk cakewalk, I can't believe they're sending me in for the PBWs — with a team to command. Maybe they just decided they needed the plans today and Command didn't want to risk anyone important on Christmas.

From the onboard log of Lieutenant Kyle, continued

It's not really Christmas, but telling myself that is the only way to cope with 50 degrees below zero at noon. OK, everybody, join on me and keep your radars passive. This isn't a long trip and if we can't even make it there, we might as well bury our butts out here in the ice and freeze to death rather than return home.

Let the record show that I'm flashing active radar. O.K., I'm nervous. I don't want to be surprised by a — gun tower.

This one's all mine, EMP away and a few ATC rounds — excellent.

Now the welcoming committee — it looks small enough — "fire at will." I'll take out another turret and head for the factory. Good kill, guys. I've already logged into the computer.

Wait, dammit! — I still need this building standing. "Hold your fire!"

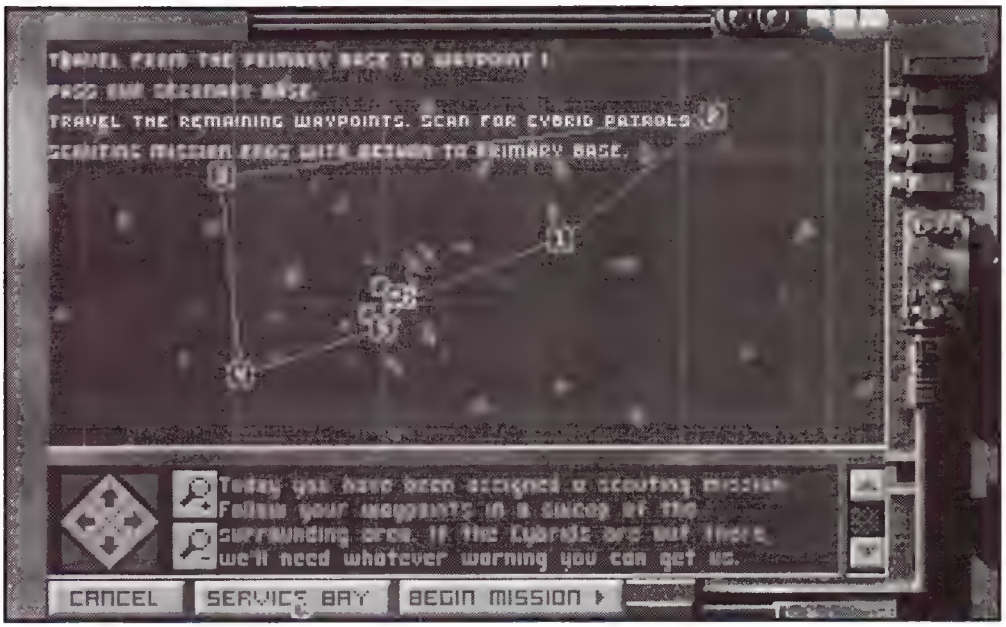
Here come the Buzzards; I'll secure one in my sights with some active radar — attack my target. OK, gang, the PBW plans are ours, fire at will and turn this base to scrap. I'll take out the factory personally — after all, human initiative is supposed to be one of our advantages.

Excellent, let's go home and deliver the Christmas presents.

Major Mission 5

Mission Type: Scout

Above All Else: Stay alive



Memo from Delta Command Munitions

MEMO

Identification

Delta Command Munitions

TO: *Scout team*
FM: *Delta Command Munitions*
RE: *Scout mission equipment*

All sources are convinced that an attack is imminent. With munitions stocks as low as they are, please do not endanger any equipment that might be essential to defending the base in the upcoming attack. There will be

MEMO *Memo from Delta Command Munitions, continued*

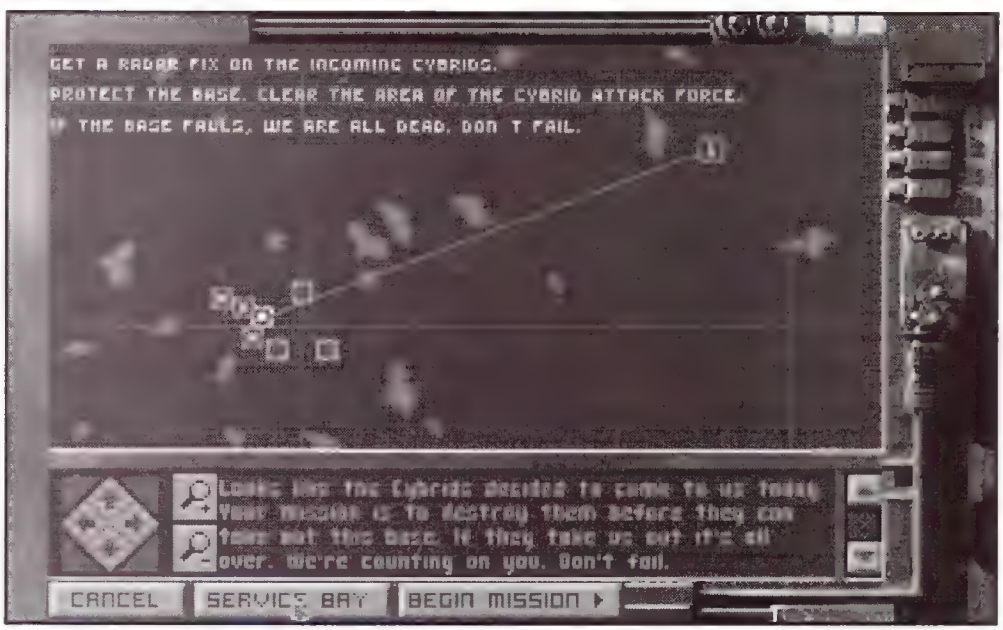
time to repair your HERC, but if you even think about losing one, make sure you've got a replacement waiting. Therefore, avoid conflict with superior forces, but at the same time, don't think about aborting unless you're being fired upon. Every waypoint you make it to lessens our disadvantage.

Good luck. Try not to get any of your team killed. They might take our hope with them.

Major Mission 6

Mission Type: Scramble

Above All Else: Protect the base


GET A RADAR FIX ON THE INCOMING CYBRIDS.
PROTECT THE BASE. CLEAR THE AREA OF THE CYBRID ATTACK FORCE.
IF THE BASE FALLS, WE ARE ALL DEAD. DON T FAIL.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the private log of Colonel Stepanovna

I begin what could be mankind's final log watching my crew of rejects head off to face the latest Cybrid attack. The word from the other bases is not good. If our pilots fail, humanity is doomed.

I remember someone telling me that before the war, the word "dire" was used as hyperbole about 3/4 of the time. Now the term appears in almost that percentage of my thoughts.

Watching our HERCs emerge onto the surface, I must commend the support staff at the base who always ensured that our pilots had the best equipment possible. They're trying to appear hopeful — at least on duty — but they can't hide their fear. They look to the future and see a rather unpleasant end to this war — one that may have just appeared on radar.

That horror must be a Pit Bull. Four legs, three EMPs...

C'mon, everyone on it, and target, dammit! Concentrate that fire — No!

Lt. Hernandez's Raptor just exploded. There won't be anything to hose out. Wait, c'mon you crummy computer — tell me if I'm hallucinating...

Two down legs disabled a Pit Bull? Excellent. Now leave it alone, children. It still looks dangerous, but your real threat is over there.

Get on it! The Cybrids only have two legs, but they're still quite capable of finishing us off.

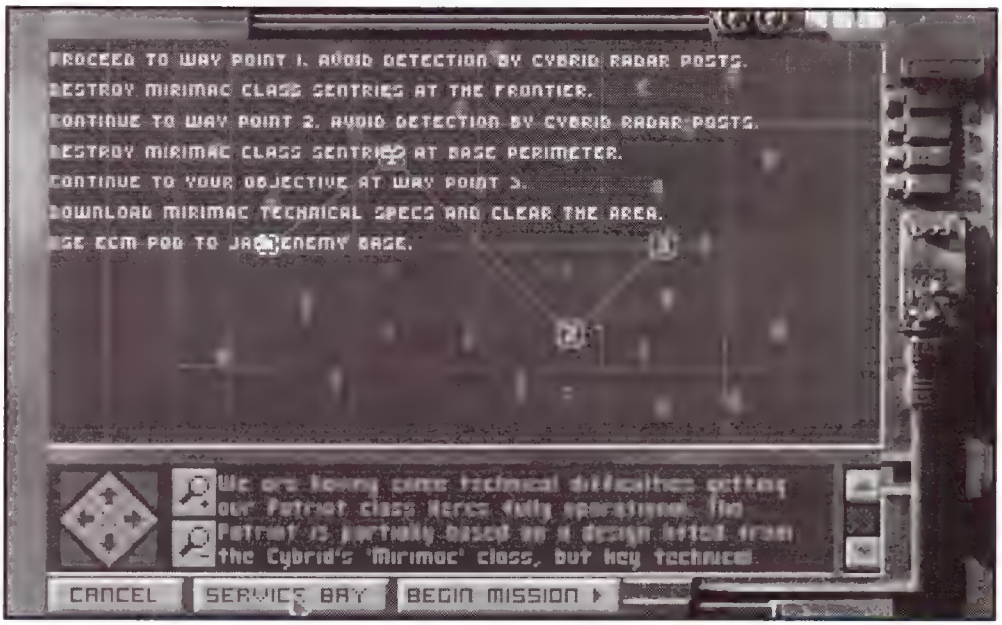
I'm sorry, I can't continue talking. If we live, then I'll make a formal report.

Bravo Sector: Offensive Campaign

Major Mission 1

Mission Type: Raid

Above All Else: Download the needed information.


PROCEED TO WAY POINT 1. AVOID DETECTION BY CYBRID RADAR POSTS.
DESTROY MIRIMAC CLASS SENTRIES AT THE FRONTIER.
CONTINUE TO WAY POINT 2. AVOID DETECTION BY CYBRID RADAR POSTS.
DESTROY MIRIMAC CLASS SENTRIES AT BASE PERIMETER.
CONTINUE TO YOUR OBJECTIVE AT WAY POINT 3.
DOWNLOAD MIRIMAC TECHNICAL SPECS AND CLEAR THE AREA.
USE ECM POD TO JAM ENEMY BASE.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the onboard log of Colonel Vanderson

Coming from Delta, soldier? Well, the only thing you have to look forward to is less ice.

Now, let me make one thing clear — you're moving into heavily infested areas. Your final goal may be at waypoint 3, but the other two are more than simple decorations on your mission map.

From the onboard log of Colonel Vanderson, continued

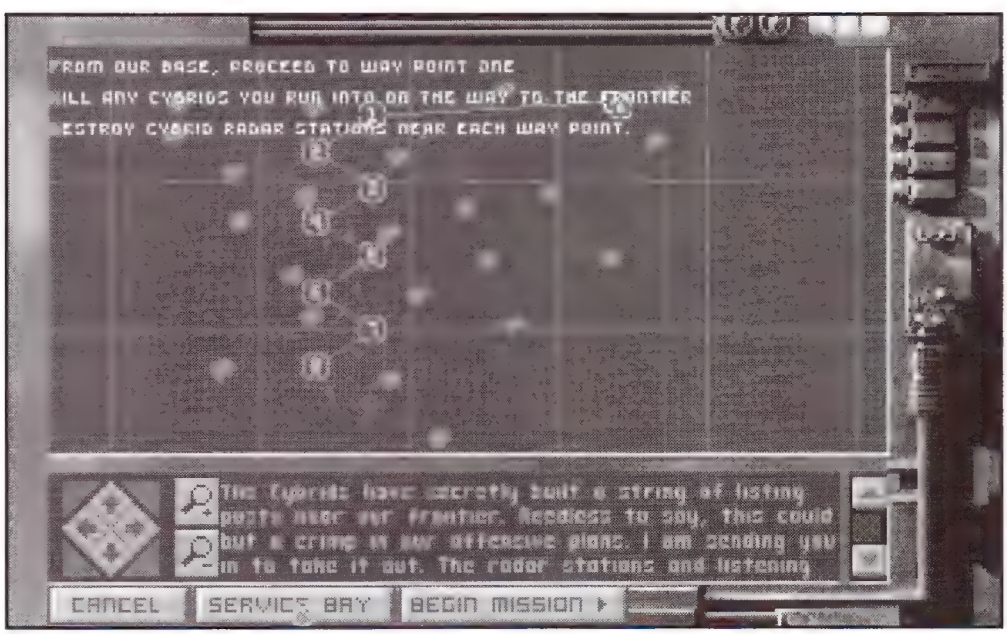
The landscape is littered with listening posts, all ready to start screaming for Hyperion class Cybrids if you get too close. On the route itself, keep your ECM off and your radar passive, since you're bound to run into some Mirimacs. I don't care how great a shot you are, pass on the missiles — it's bad enough that you need an entire hard point for your ECM pod.

Since you really have no choice but to engage the Mirimacs head on, forget about salvage. Take them out as quickly as possible. No amount of weapons or tonnage can make up for the lack of a functioning Patriot. Good luck, see you back here.

Major Mission 2

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Take out the Cybrid radar towers


FROM OUR BASE, PROCEED TO WAY POINT ONE
ILL ANY CYBRIDS YOU RUN INTO ON THE WAY TO THE FRONTIER
ESTROY CYBRID RADAR STATIONS NEAR EACH WAY POINT.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the files of 2nd Lieutenant Meyers, discharged

Pardon my typing, but after my last go at this mission I'm still waiting for my artificial larynx — at the bottom of the list where they keep all of us failures.

Sometimes I envy my squad members who died. It was my fault but at least they were spared any more time in this hell.

But I'm not doing this to demoralize you. My goal is to somehow redeem myself by explaining what I went up against, and what I learned from this disaster.

First thing you'll notice is that there are eight waypoints on this strike — which means unless

From the files of 2nd Lieutenant Meyers, discharged, continued

your hard point requires it, don't even think about taking any missiles. You also won't have the luxury of space for ECMs, and a PBW is the last thing you'll want hogging space and energy.

The Cybrids will be coming at you from all angles, often in pairs so close that you and your squad might be tempted to think of them as one giant HERC. While this can make for a great first attack it can also leave you unprepared for when they split up. Because they will split up and you don't know what directions they may take, keep your distance. Do not charge them, because the instant they get you confused and out of position to attack, their numerical advantage becomes crippling.

This makes teamwork exponentially more important. I'm sure you've been on some missions where a teammate will yell for help and you won't or can't come to their aid. On a less crowded battlefield, they might get away with a crippled leg or even hobble out of range.

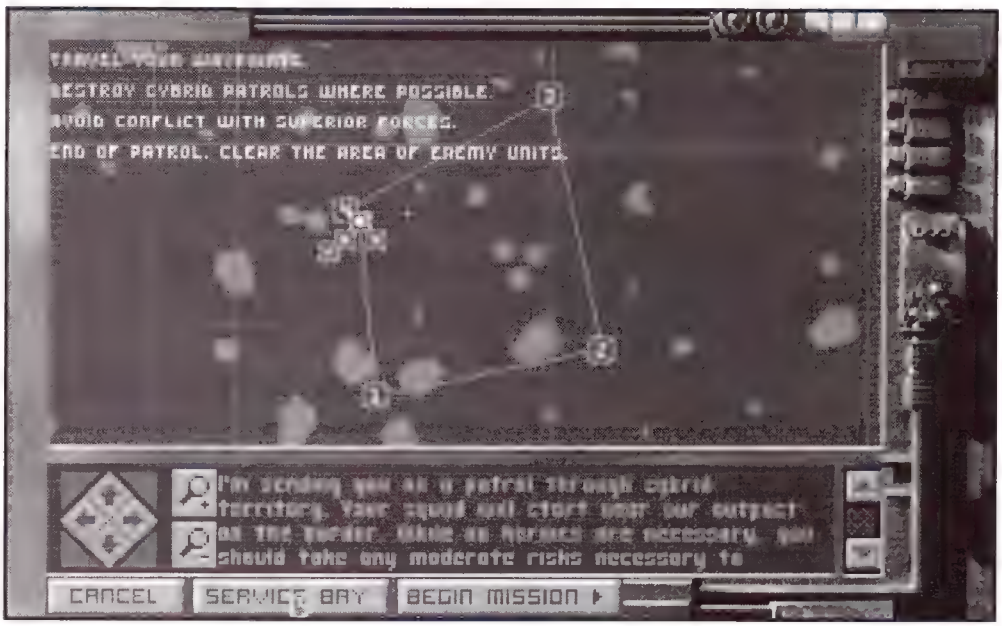
Not so here. Ignoring a call for help almost guarantees that at least one of you is going to die. You must always work in concert. If you are not attacking the same Cybrid, one should be covering the other's attack on a target that you both know about. Often this will mean assigning your squad members to attack the mission targets while you guard their backside; or, if you're working on the Cybrid buildings, don't be too proud to scream for help.

As soon as the tin cans start to seriously stomp on you, spend a few seconds taking out any radar in sight, and then don't be afraid to abort.

Major Mission 3

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Stay alive


DESTROY CYBRID PATROLS WHERE POSSIBLE.
AVOID CONFLICT WITH SUPERIOR FORCES.
END OF PATROL. CLEAR THE AREA OF ENEMY UNITS.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Vanderson

Onboard Log

Identification

Colonel Vanderson

I know what you're thinking: The mission map looks about as friendly as Saunders during a hemorrhoidal flare-up. It's not that bad, so listen up.

You're going to be doing most of your fighting from long distance, so take a pass on the PBWs and make sure you have at least two high-caliber ATCs (35mm or bigger) on each HERC. Feed all of that saved energy to your EMPs.

Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Vanderson, continued

The first key is avoiding the listening posts. You'll probably meet some light resistance — kill the tin cans quickly, but whatever you do, don't let them lead you near the listening post or make you turn your radar active. By the way, if you blow up the radar, expect a Pit Bull.

You should start firing on the installation as soon as you have visual contact. Rather than charging in, keep your squad close together as you approach at about half-speed. The trick is to take out as many towers as you can in a wedge-shaped pattern, opening a clear path to the five main buildings.

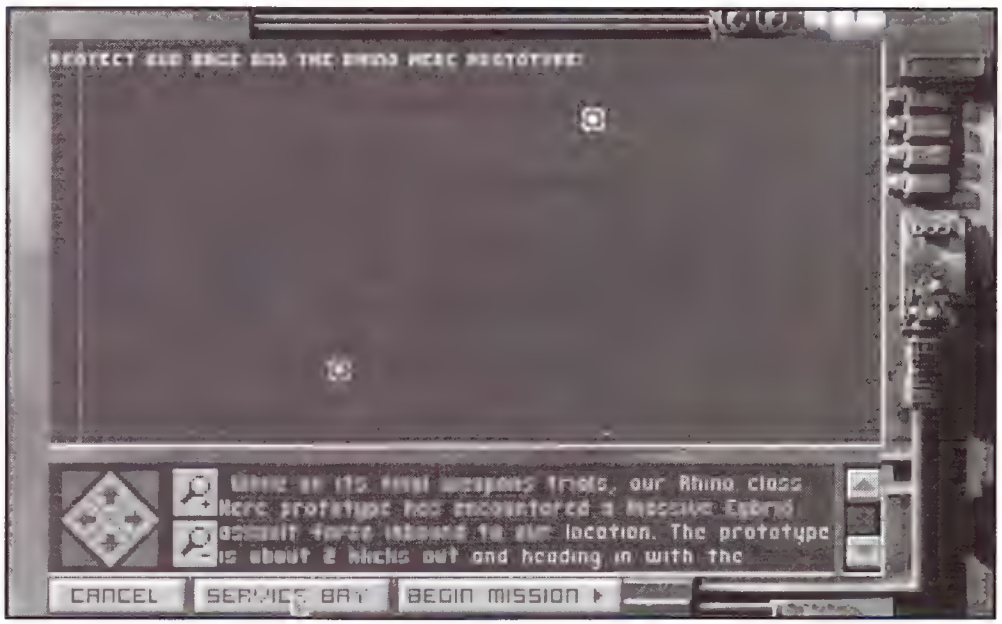
Once you've got the buildings in your sights, charge toward them and keep firing until you've taken out at least three. Then get close enough to the remaining ones to hit them with ATCs and an EMP. Get no closer and, if possible, start backing away as you complete the assignment.

One final word — this is the ideal scenario. There's a chance you'll find a Pit Bull at the base. If you can take it out, do it — if not, GET OUT OF THERE. The base isn't worth losing two pilots as well as their HERCs.

Major Mission 4

Mission Type: Scramble/Escort

Above All Else: Protect the Rhino prototypes



Memo from Gut

MEMO

Identification

Gut

TO: *HDF Tech Division*
FM: *Gut*
RE: *Rhino Class HERC*

As you know, this Rhino did not show up in the greatest condition, but unlike the pilot, there was still enough left to make a positive ID. My request for lost technical information is attached to this document.

MEMO *Memo from Gut, continued*

Considering the damage to our base, I can understand why you were less than courteous with all of us, but now that the rebuilding's begun, I have the following questions/suggestions for the future:

1. Why were we even testing Rhinos in territory that wasn't secured?

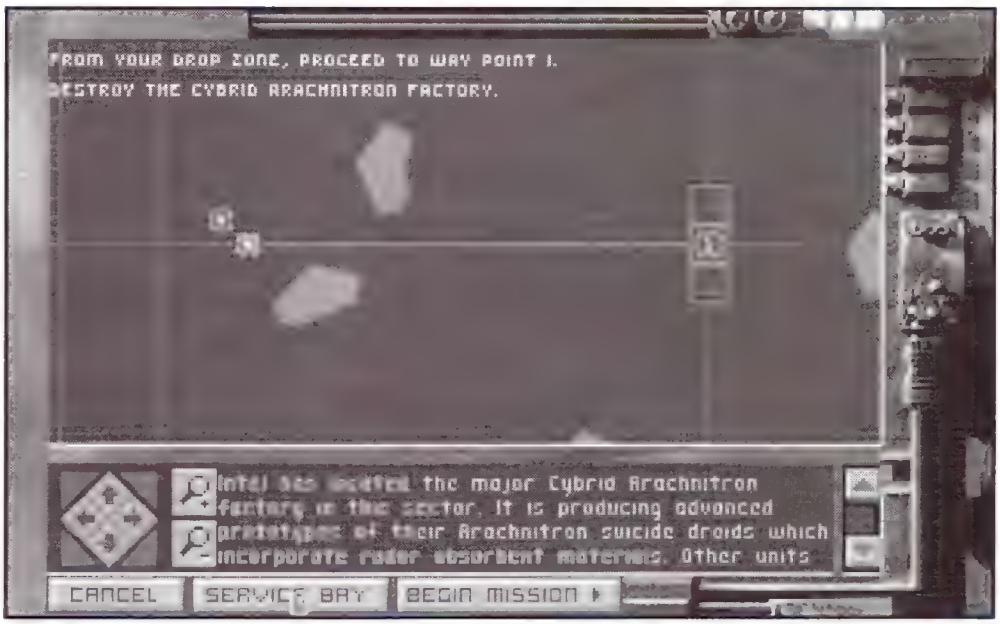
2. We've heard no information regarding local and global planning from the HDF. Recently, all smaller HERCs have been stripped down for parts. The last thing any of us expected was a foot race to act as a living shield for the unarmed prototype.

3. Regarding the orders for that mission, no priority was given. Which was more important: protecting the Rhino or the base? If it was the Rhino, the squad should have taken as many arrays of missiles as possible in hopes of crippling the first pair of pursuit HERCs. This would provide safe passage for the Rhino but would leave them in a lousy position to protect the base from any further damage.

Major Mission 5

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the Arachnitron factories



Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Vanderson

Onboard Log

Identification

Colonel Vanderson

Look at the diagram. There are three large buildings. Blow them up. If it seems I'm being unnecessarily simplistic, I'm not. Between the gun towers and the horde of spiders, it is going to be tough to concentrate on big harmless buildings when everything else is trying to kill you. Speed is naturally an important factor, so go ahead and take Tomahawks and not Patriots. Against this many

Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Vanderson, continued

radar-resistant targets, missiles will be not only a waste of hard points, but a waste of this very important opportunity as well.

Energy weapons start to slow down when you need them most and are better for long, slow missions. You need ATCs — as many as you can get — especially the 50mms. If you must use energy weapons, take the biggest laser that won't displace your 50mm ATCs.

Once you've touched ground, start running in the direction of the factory and don't stop. Sure, weave a little bit left and right, but you should never veer far and NEVER SLOW DOWN. Kill all the bugs you can until you see the first sign of the Cybrid base, and then forget about the spiders. Take out the two side gun towers first and move your firepower inward. As soon as all three buildings are down, you can call for help.

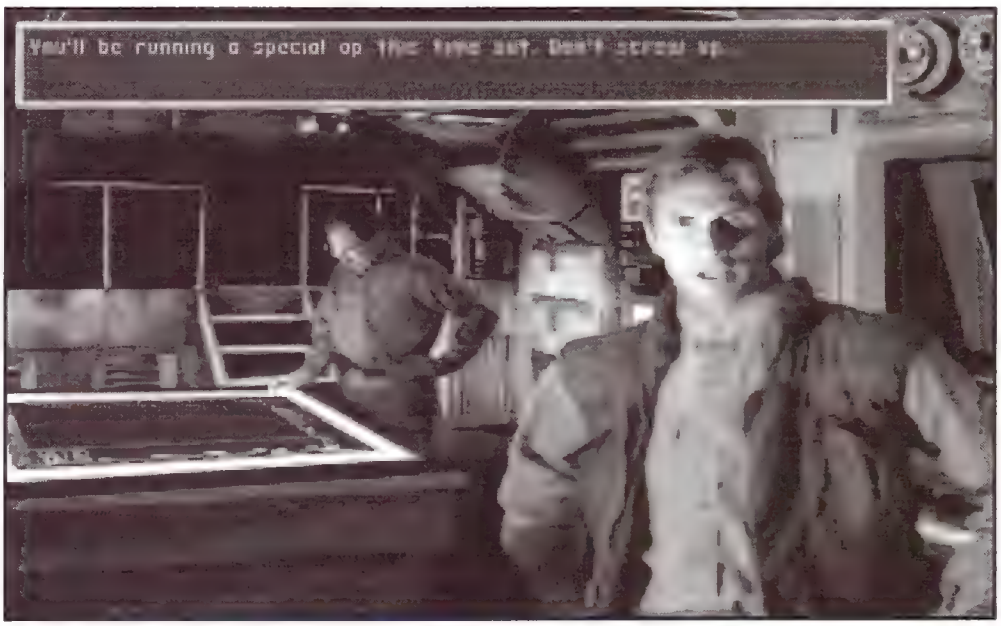
If you must use auto-tracking, it is critical that you leave the radar on passive or else you'll be sifting through all the bugs while 50mm guntowers are blasting off your hard points.

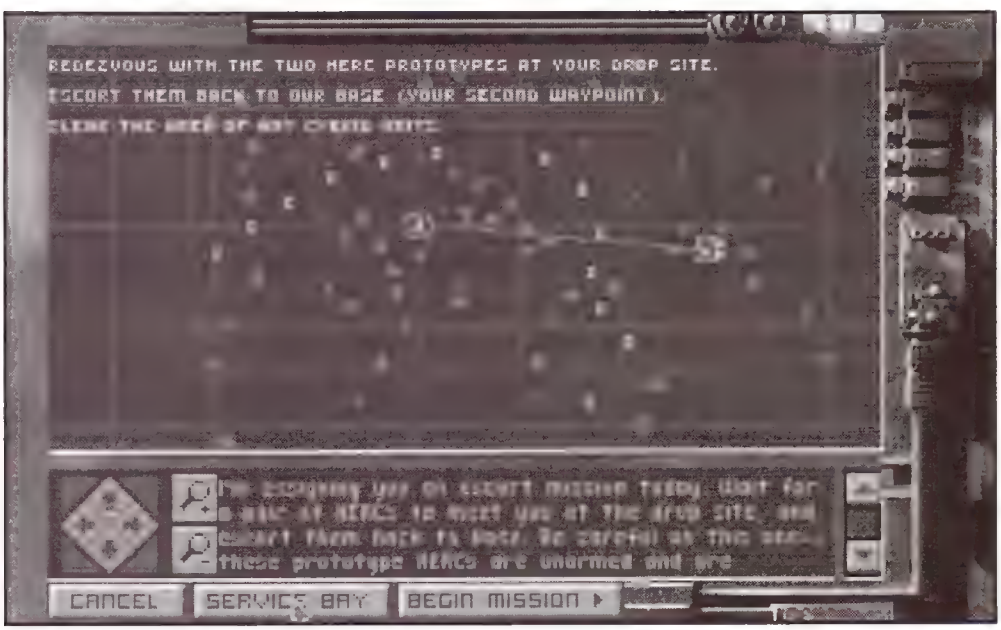
Bravo Sector: Defensive Campaign

Major Mission 1

Mission Type: Escort

Above All Else: Protect the Patriots




RENDEZVOUS WITH THE TWO HERC PROTOTYPES AT YOUR DROP SITE.
ESCORT THEM BACK TO OUR BASE (YOUR SECOND WAYPOINT).
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Saunders

Identification

Colonel Saunders

Looks like I'm being punished for your pathetic performance last time by getting stuck with you again. Well, if you embarrass me this time, you won't have to worry about me yelling at you, because we'll all be dead!

Anyhow, the new Patriots are coming our way and they're unarmed. Your job is to make sure they get here OK.

Now, Intelligence has learned that the Cybrids will be dropping their HERCs — most likely Hyperions — along the way. This means that if you get stuck in a firefight and fall behind, you're condemning two test pilots to death. This is the key: Whenever a Cybrid HERC comes into range, do as much damage as you can by charging toward it, and then run past it, keeping pace with the prototypes.

If your squad has any talent whatsoever, they should be able to finish off the Cybrids.

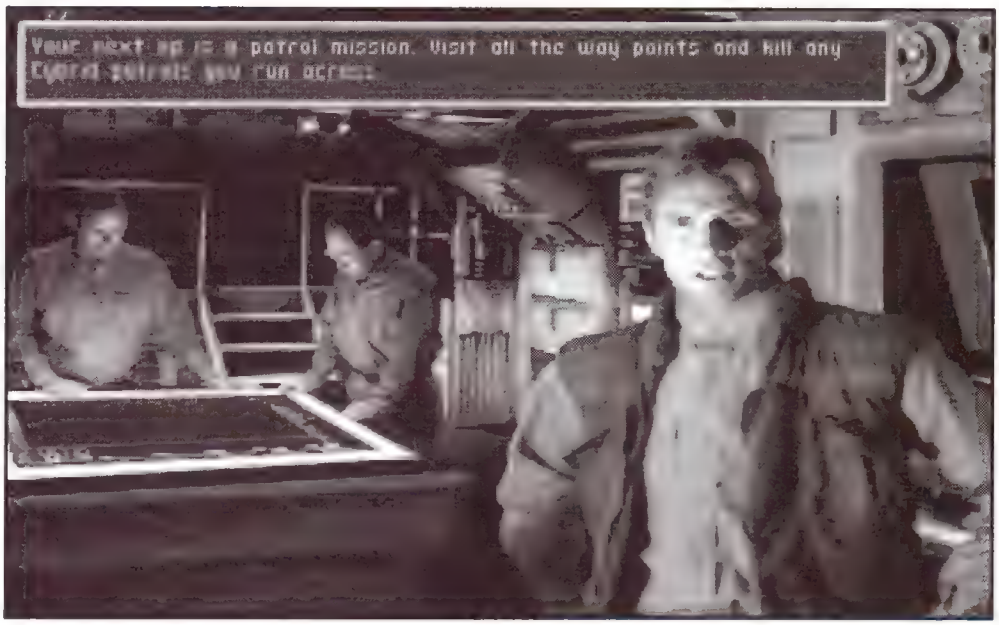
For your lead HERC, I suggest a Tomahawk armed with ATCs — including the 50mm on top — and lasers.

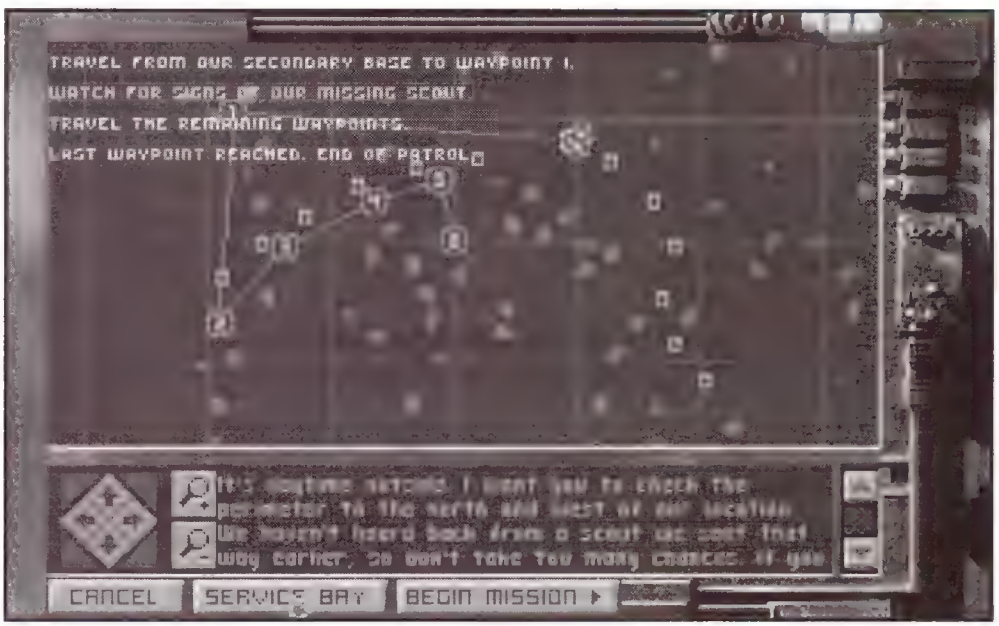
Don't think about your record, don't think about salvage — just keep those Patriots alive. And if the decision comes down to helping your squad or the Patriot pilots, remember, your own pilots can at least defend themselves.

Major Mission 2

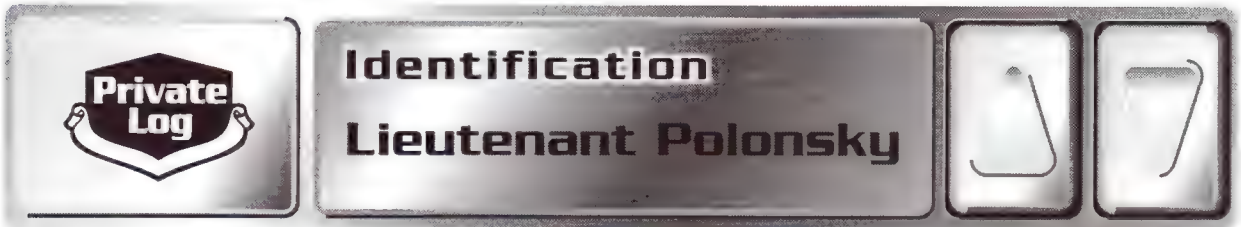
Mission Type: Search and Rescue

Above All Else: Stay alive




TRAVEL FROM OUR SECONDARY BASE TO WAYPOINT 1.
WATCH FOR SIGNS OF OUR MISSING SCOUT.
TRAVEL THE REMAINING WAYPOINTS.
LAST WAYPOINT REACHED. END OF PATROL.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the private log of Lieutenant Polonsky



Fun day today. Saunders (who was in a relatively tolerable mood) only referred to us as morons when he assigned the mission. Apparently, another reject had been crippled the night before and we got to go find it.

The mission got off to a scary start, since the radar map was showing Cybrids all over the place. Facing a potential Cybrid ploy to split us up, I kept the squad together until I had a positive target image: Arachnitron. The team had fun picking them off with the aid of our gun towers — in fact, no one was even damaged when I tried to regroup and proceed to the first waypoint.

It took a lot of time and screaming to get everybody back together, but it was worth the effort. Near waypoint 1 we found the missing scout as well as more Cybrids — not Arachnitrons but Achilles. They managed to cripple one of the squad before we took it out.

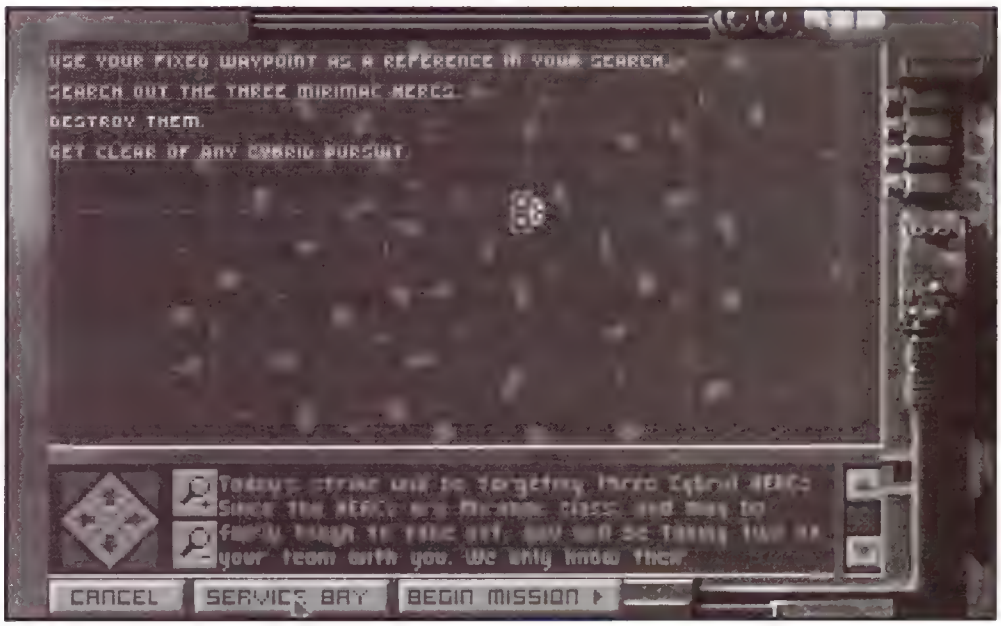
No hope for salvage there; the tin cans had more missiles than I wanted to count and one of those electron-flux thingees. The weapon would have made a nice prize, but enough was enough. Once the tin cans were down, we finished the patrol with heads and radar down.

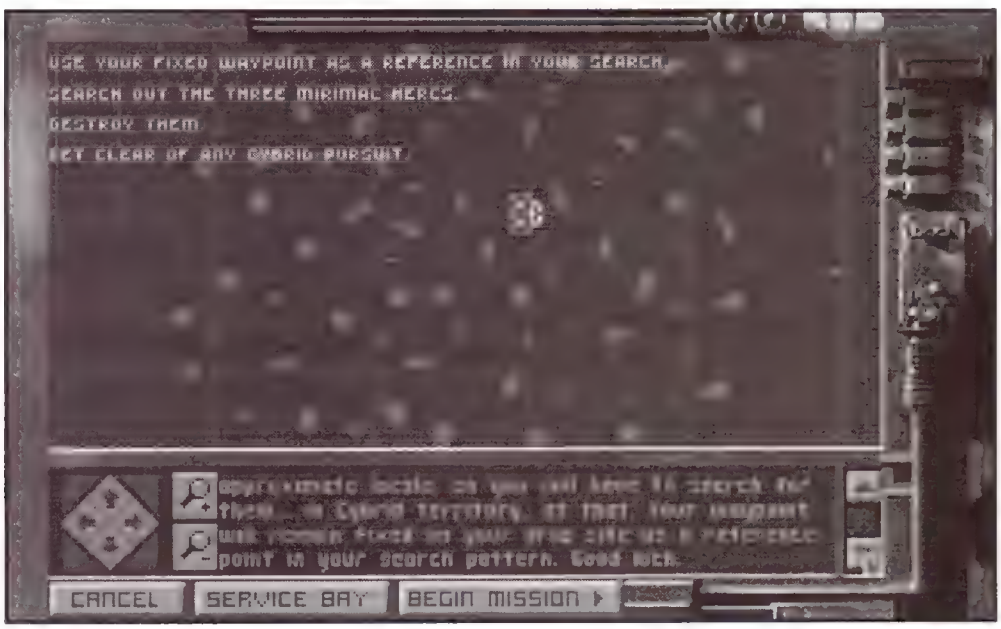
Sure everyone was mad about the damage to our HERCs, but I did find the downed scout, and last time I checked, saving lives still meant something.

Major Mission 3

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Stay alive


USE YOUR FIXED WAYPOINT AS A REFERENCE IN YOUR SEARCH.
SEARCH OUT THE THREE MIRIMAC MERCS.
DESTROY THEM.
GET CLEAR OF ANY CYBRID PURSUIT.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION


USE YOUR FIXED WAYPOINT AS A REFERENCE IN YOUR SEARCH.
SEARCH OUT THE THREE MIRIMAC MERCS.
DESTROY THEM.
GET CLEAR OF ANY CYBRID PURSUIT.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Transcript of private recording to pilots from Lieutenant Wilson

Hi. Since I lost half my squad fighting the Mirimacs on my last — in both meanings of the word — mission, Col. Saunders asked me to give you some advice before you go out on this one.

Above all else, stick together. Just because you have a lot of area to find three lousy Cybrids in doesn't mean they'll be evenly distributed. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if you encountered two of them together. Besides their superior firepower, you'll also have to be extremely careful about the terrain. It doesn't matter if you're five meters away from your partner when the Cybrid ripping his HERC apart is on the other side of a rock.

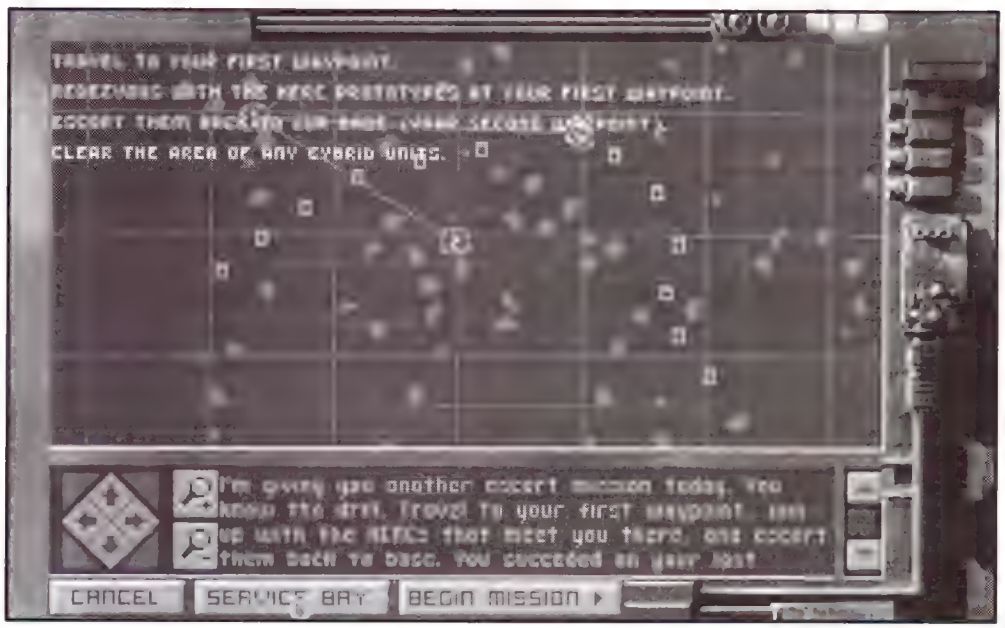
The Cybrids will probably have ARM missiles, so even though you'll need active radar to find them, make sure that, by the time you've got visual contact, everybody's radar is passive. This means no SARH or ARH missiles — in fact, the only reason to even pick a Patriot over a missile-free Tomahawk is for the added armor. (That added armor also means sacrificing your speed advantage. There's nothing sadder than hearing a squad member die because you were too slow to get to their side.)

Speed is critical since the mission field is littered with Cybrid ATC towers. If you're badly damaged or low on energy and are chasing a Cybrid, be prepared to disengage at any moment because they won't hesitate to lead you right past their supporting fire. As long as you stick together and pass on the missiles, you'll be fine. Otherwise, be prepared to end up on a tin can dissection table.

Major Mission 4

Mission Type: Escort

Above All Else: Protect Rhino prototypes



From an HDF Command classified communique

TO: *Col. Saunders*
FM: *HDF Command*
RE: *Rhino Class HERCs*

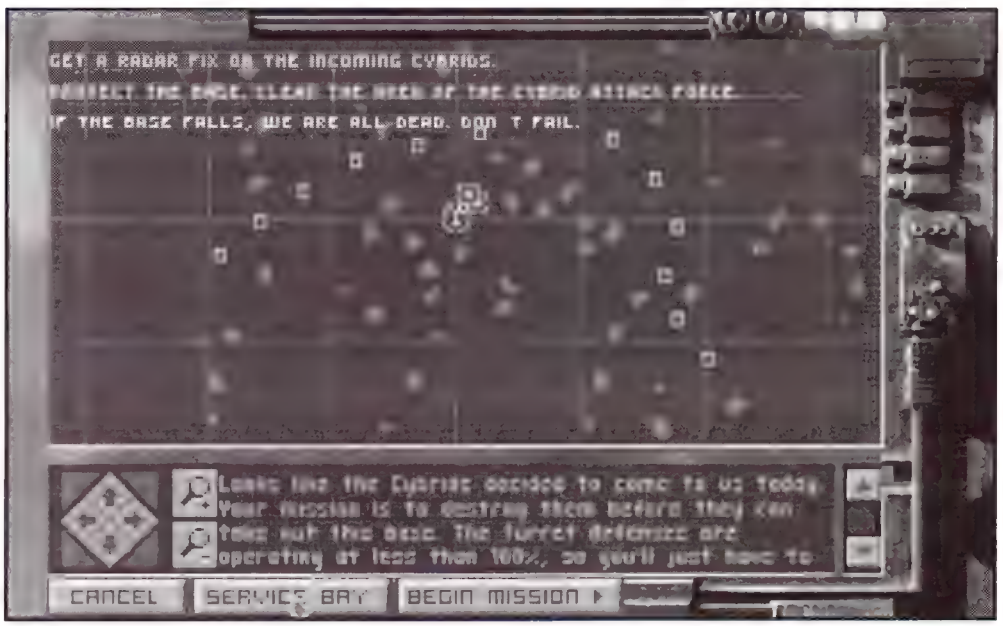
Considering your team's somewhat spotty record, we have made a last-minute change in our plans to deliver the HERCs. We will be employing far more air coverage and dropping off the HERCs, not when it best serves our schedules, but when their escorts arrive within a few meters of the first waypoint. Therefore, encourage your pilots to spend as much time as necessary clearing the area of Cybrids on their way to meet the prototypes. They shouldn't wander too far off the assigned path, but we feel it would be in everybody's best interest if they were able to fight without the burden of their escort duties.

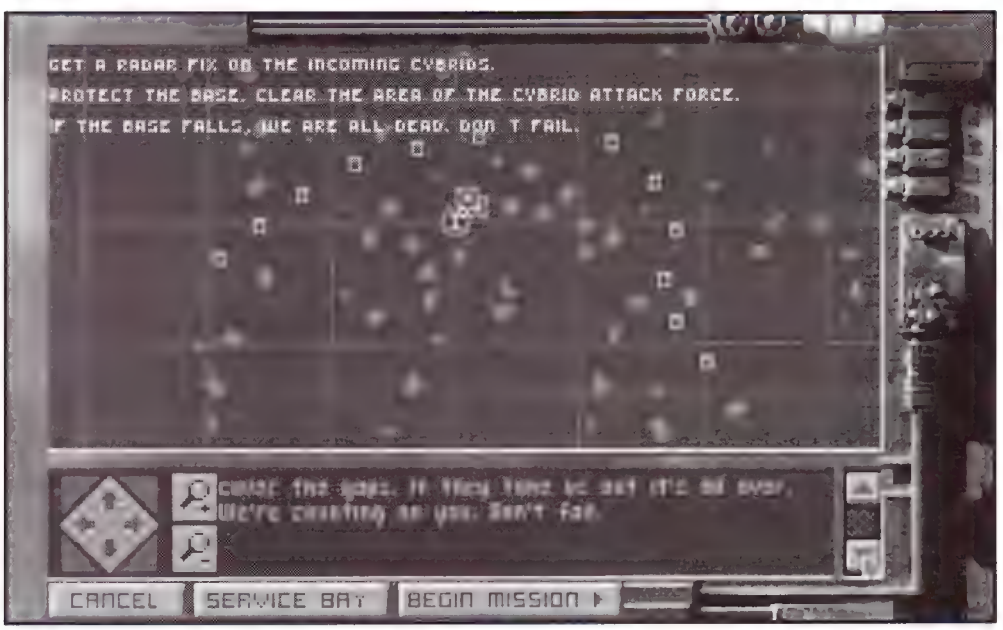
Upon reaching waypoint 1, they will be greeted by the Rhinos and must defend them on the run back to your base. Once again, given the status of the war, it is critical that these HERCs arrive in good shape. Sacrifice whatever is necessary to get the Rhinos and their pilots onto the base safely.

Major Mission 5

Mission Type: Scramble

Above All Else: Protect the base


GET A RADAR FIX ON THE INCOMING CYBRIDS.
PROTECT THE BASE. CLEAR THE AREA OF THE CYBRID ATTACK FORCE.
IF THE BASE FALLS, WE ARE ALL DEAD. DON T FAIL.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION


GET A RADAR FIX ON THE INCOMING CYBRIDS.
PROTECT THE BASE. CLEAR THE AREA OF THE CYBRID ATTACK FORCE.
IF THE BASE FALLS, WE ARE ALL DEAD. DON T FAIL.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the private log of Colonel Saunders

I thought the holocaust was tough — at least then I knew there was nothing I could do. But this is excruciating, watching a bunch of mediocre pilots fighting for all of our lives.

The tactical map shows the Cybrids coming in from at least three different angles. They're probably not coming in all at once so our team has to stay together and close to the base.

Dammit! One of the Patriots is down. I'll remember that scream as long and as clearly as my own Lila's. Worthless trash, those Patriots. Even with passive radar and stuffed with ARMs, they don't seem to be doing us much good.

I knew we should have scrapped every one that was being built the moment the Rhino specs were complete. Hell, we should have armed the prototypes.

At least the Tomahawk pilots are handling themselves well. The enemies have been spotted so they're just flashing active radar to help get a fix before going in. Targeting on, all weapons focused inward. This group might not be the most talented, but they're not stupid. No one's taking risks to get salvage, and they actually are staying together.

If we beat them back, the Cybrids will probably regret a staggered attack. My major regret will be not taking more control of what happens in the service bays.

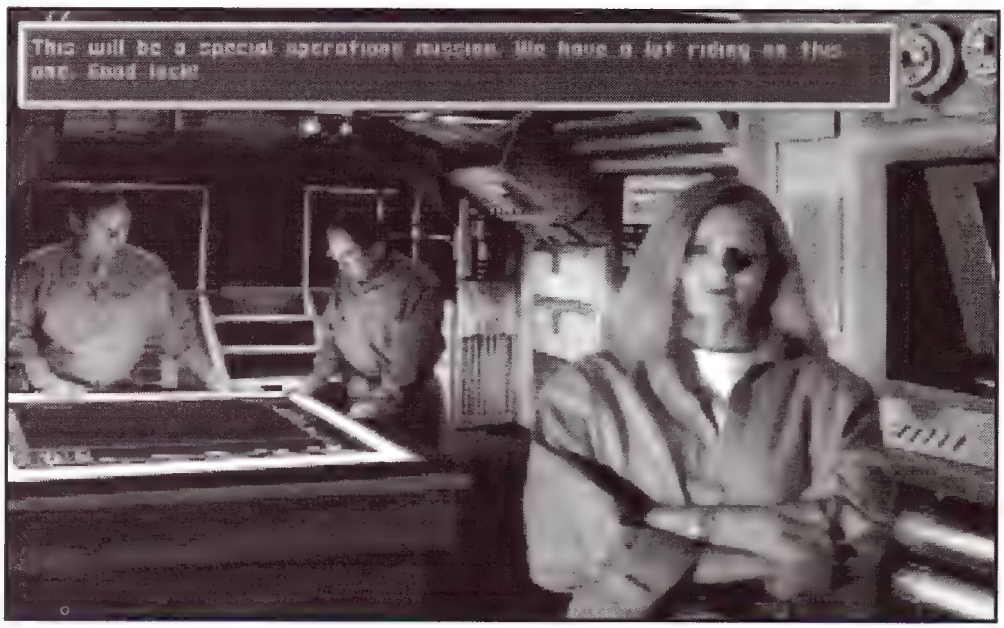
But enough wallowing. If we survive, I'll save it for the official report.

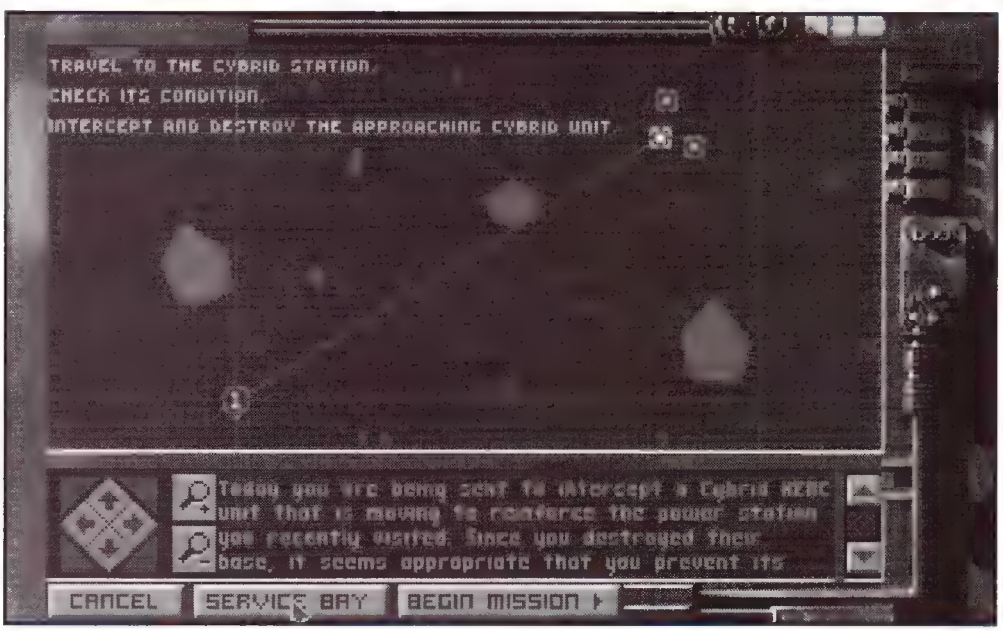
Gamma Sector: Offensive Campaign

Major Mission 1

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Take out the base





Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Stepanovna

Welcome to Gamma Quadrant. I'm glad to see you've made it this far in the war, soldier. Now listen up.

Gamma isn't like the resorts you've been in before. The first thing I want you to notice is how hot it is today. You'll find that your weapons will occasionally overheat and not fire. This means that you have to be fast pulling them out of chains or at least skipping to other weapons that aren't quite as hot.

Most new pilots coming here have gotten quite comfortable with missile-free Tomahawks. That's not going to work here. You'll need more armor and missiles to bail you out when nothing else will fire.

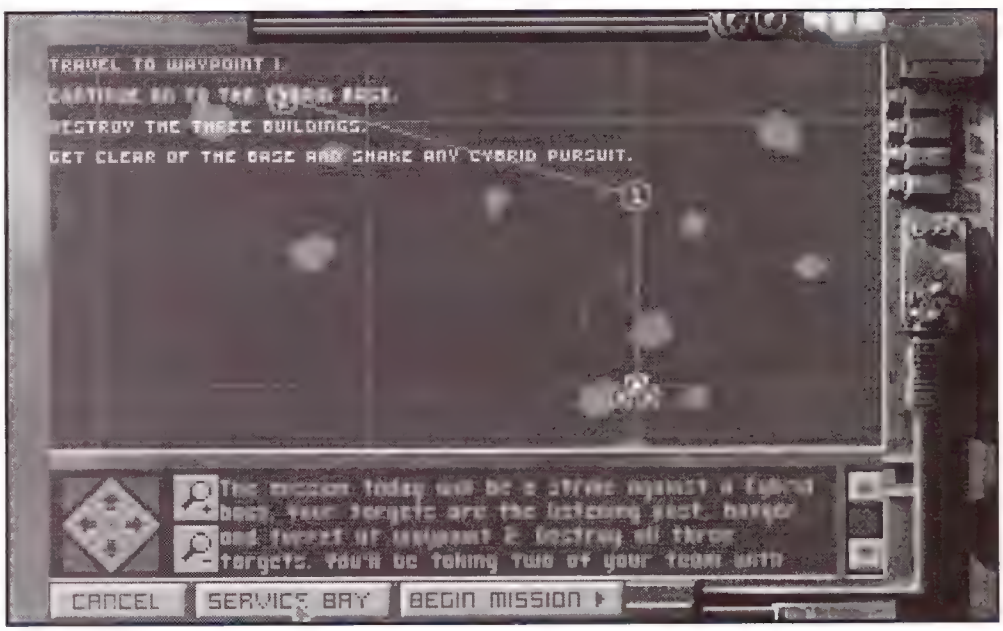
This first assignment shouldn't be too tough. Guarding the base is one Hyperion unit and a few gun towers. Take out the HERC first — approaching slowly and as a group. Then work on the towers and the other buildings. This shouldn't cause you too many problems.

I'll see you when you come back.

Major Mission 2

Mission Type: Raid

Above All Else: Stay alive



Memo from HDF Command

MEMO

Identification
HDF Command

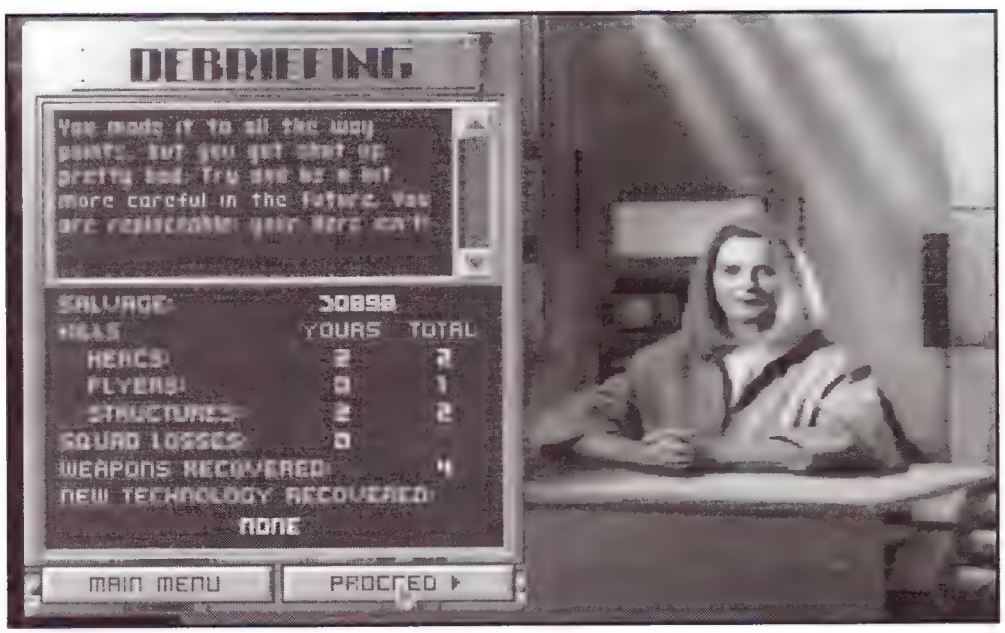
TO: *All Pilots*
FM: *HDF Command*

Many of you have already experienced this, but it has come to our attention that the Cybrids have been mixing Arachnitron sentries with their normal HERC guards. After a near-disaster on a simple raid in Gamma, we want to make it policy that, in any situation where you are facing Arachnitrons, you keep the auto-tracking off, no matter what the circumstances are. For squad commanders, this means it's doubly important to keep everyone under tight control with regard to their choice of targets. Remember, a few spiders can cripple a HERC, but down and disabled is still a better situation than having your cockpit blown out from enemy fire. For simulator training, additional maps, and information, check with the station tactical liaisons.

Major Mission 3

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the Cybrid recon team



From the official report of Lieutenant Loggins

Identification
Lieutenant Loggins

As pilot of the smallest HERC and as lowest-ranking officer, I want it known that I'm especially uncomfortable doing this. But as sole survivor it's my duty, and since this war began, we've all learned to sacrifice time for grieving.

The mission started out alright. In fact, it seemed quite peaceful. We returned to find the base untouched since we trashed the place a few days ago.

It's easy to place blame on a dead man, but I fault our commander for the disaster. He just told us to walk around the area with our radar activated until it picked up the Cybrids.

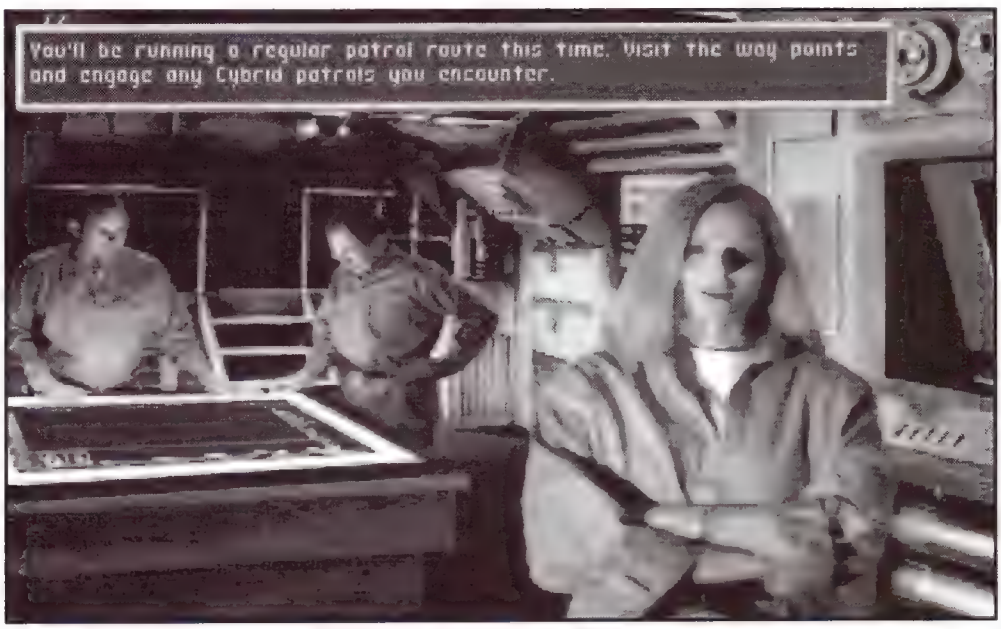
The active radar wasn't the problem — our location was. In the middle of the ruins, we found ourselves constantly tripping over the rubble and having our shots blocked by what was left of the large buildings. Coordinating firepower was impossible.

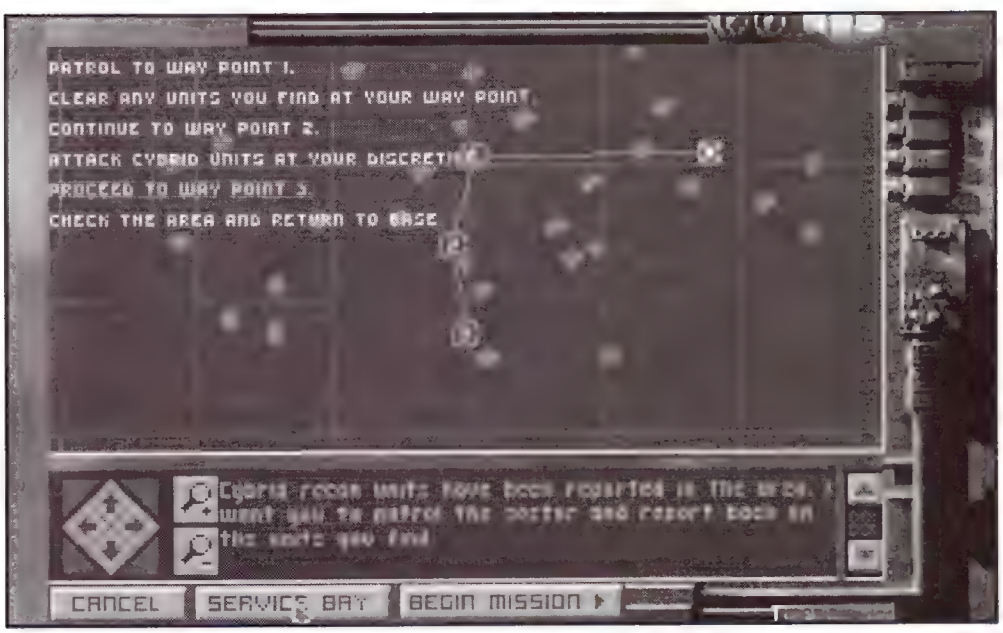
I've spent hours with the maps since then, wishing that the commander had spent all of that precious time placing us in position. We could have worked together, or separately for a passive-radar three-way pounce on the tin cans. We weren't outnumbered. We weren't so badly outgunned. But we were slaughtered anyway.

Major Mission 4

Mission type: Strike

Above All Else: Take out the base




PATROL TO WAY POINT 1.
CLEAR ANY UNITS YOU FIND AT YOUR WAY POINT.
CONTINUE TO WAY POINT 2.
ATTACK CYBRID UNITS AT YOUR DISCRETION.
PROCEED TO WAY POINT 3.
CHECK THE AREA AND RETURN TO BASE.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Logged into pilot's computer by Captain Dawson, second in command, Gamma Quadrant

This is a nightmare mission for the radar-dependent. Not only are there dozens of targets on the ground, but many of them are completely inactive. These are the flyers.

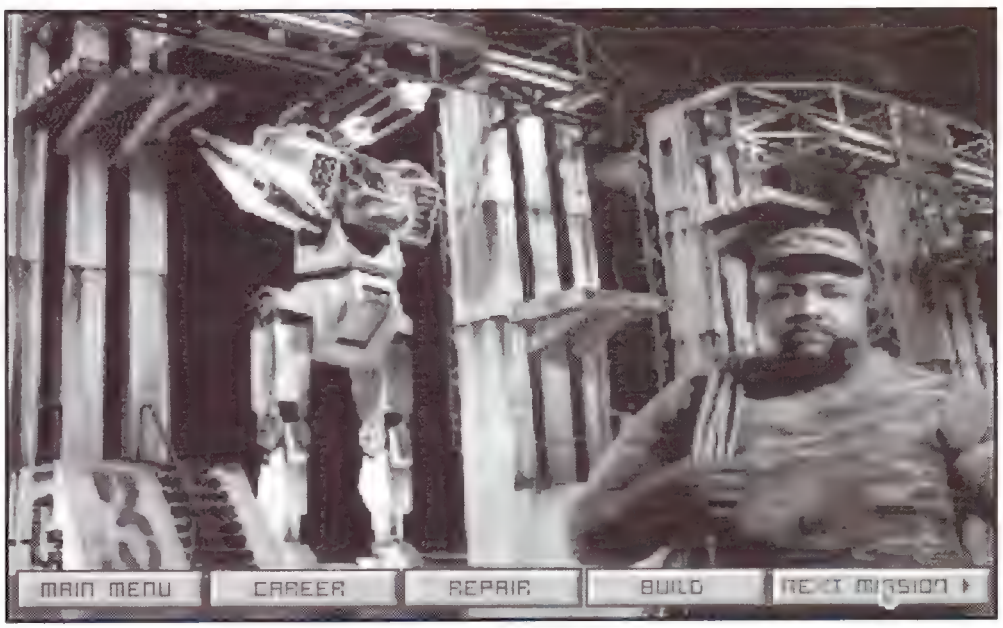
You can kiss off, not only any forms of auto-targeting, but also your active radar, because the last thing you want is to have the Cybrids alert and ready for you. In fact, there's a good chance that the main defense HERCs are hidden within the core of the compound, so stay together and think about going around the terrain rather than attacking the base from the easiest angle. Again, remember that your goal is to destroy the critical buildings. It may be fun blowing up grounded craft, but the key is not destroying the inventory, but eliminating their capability to make more — something which may be critical to our success in this campaign.

But if you've got the time and the extra ammo, there's no need to hold back in your destruction — the Cybrids never have.

Major Mission 5

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the Cybrid installation



Memo from Colonel Stepanovna

MEMO

Identification

Colonel Stepanovna

TO: *HDF Command*
FM: *Col. Stepanovna*
RE: *Alpha Squadron disaster*

Being caught off-guard is the last thing anyone wants to admit to, even the dead, but that is what happened to

MEMO *Memo from Colonel Stepanovna, continued*

Alpha Squadron. They tried to out-think the Cybrids, breaking into two teams in an effort to get the Cybrids from two angles. Unfortunately, good thinking met with bad luck and more heavily armed Cybrids.

We didn't expect the Cybrids to be so far away from their base, and they were able to knock out both squads before we were even thinking about combat.

I know how critical destroying this base is, so I'm sending in another squad today — this one will be smaller with more specific instructions. The Cybrids seem unconcerned about taking defenses away from the base in hopes of ambushing us again. I've suggested to our pilots that they swing around as far away as possible from the two dead squads and try to bypass the Cybrid assault team.

With dead HERCs at roughly 5:00 and 7:00 on the base-centered clock face of the map, the teams will swing around the perimeter clockwise and won't move inward until they reach at least 9:00. Naturally, they'll be running with passive radar and ECMs off until absolutely necessary.

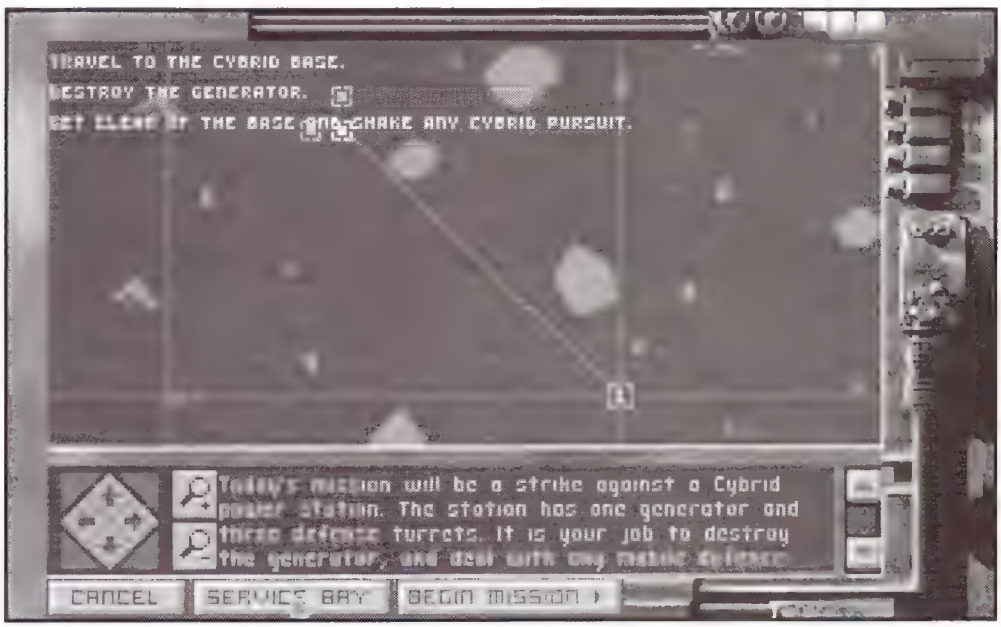
If we're wrong, there will not be a follow-up report.

Gamma Sector: Defensive Campaign

Major Mission 1

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the Cybrid base



Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Vanderson

Consider yourself lucky, soldier, that you've got me as CO again. Saunders would probably have tried to flog you the way you botched that Arachnitron assignment. Don't think I'm happy to see you, but since the rest of the pilots might resent our newly defensive position, I might as well

Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Vanderson, continued

get your butt out on the field as soon as possible. Maybe you can even redeem yourself.

Initial recon suggests that this power base isn't too heavily guarded — that is, there aren't a bunch Cybrids running around. However, we've managed to learn that there's at least one Hyperion-class Cybrid HERC. For the culturally ignorant, Hyperion was a name for the Greek god of the sun and, accordingly, this one's got enough high-energy weapons to turn you to ash before you can even yell for help. Obviously, the key here is to take this one out quickly and from a distance.

This means EMPs and missiles for the entire squad, and make sure you don't get into a face-to-face battle. If you manage to survive the Hyperion, the generator shouldn't be too much trouble. Remember the weak points, and have one of your squad members take out the towers in the meantime — those 50mms are particular nasty after a Hyperion has melted down your armor.

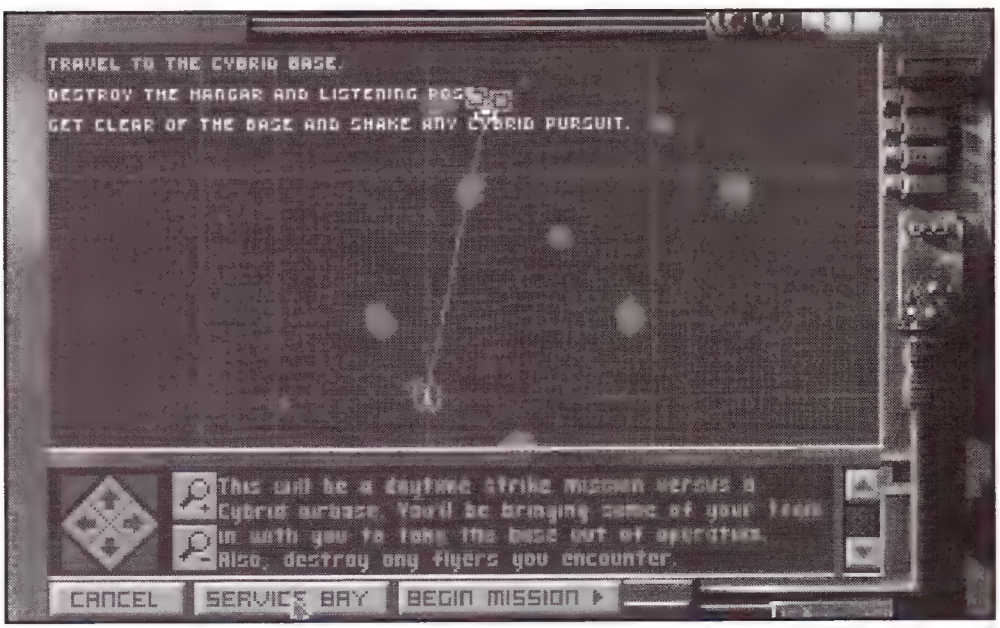
Major Mission 2

An almost identical operation was running simultaneously, elsewhere in Gamma. Refer back to Gamma, offensive campaign, Major Mission 2. That survivor's account says it all. Read it, and try not to get the impression that no good deed goes unpunished.

Major Mission 3

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the base


TRAVEL TO THE CYBRID BASE.
DESTROY THE HANGAR AND LISTENING POST.
GET CLEAR OF THE BASE AND SHAKE ANY CYBRID PURSUIT.
This will be a daytime strike mission versus a
Cybrid outpost. You'll be bringing some of your team
in with you to take the base out of operation.
Also, destroy any flyers you encounter.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the private log of Dr. A. Ahmonson

It actually all fell into place today. I can't believe Vanderson let me do this and, what's more, I can't believe it worked. This would have never been approved by Saunders and not even Gierling, but the simulator results were indisputable.

Lt. Dill had finally gotten over his fear of Arachnitrons and was perfect for the Buzzard base strike. Weeks of practice had taught him to prioritize and this was the perfect opportunity to examine the results.

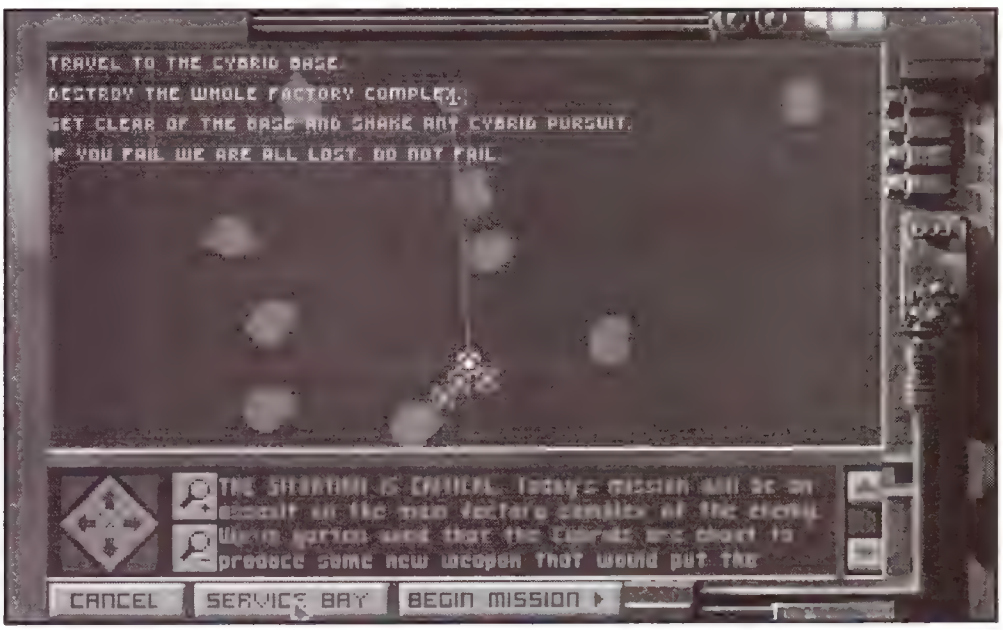
The squad wasn't pleased to see the Pit Bull at the entrance, but nobody panicked. Dill had no problem concentrating on the HERCs and the gun towers with the rest of the squad. At the end of the mission, he was even able to stop blowing up the grounded HERCs and get out of there when the Cybrid reinforcements arrived.

I've seen the tapes. His confidence is back and he's been showing even greater skill moving and firing than in the early missions. Watch out cans, we've rehabilitated a giant-killer.

Major Mission 4

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the Cybrid base


TRAVEL TO THE CYBRID BASE.
DESTROY THE WHOLE FACTORY COMPLEX.
GET CLEAR OF THE BASE AND SHAKE ANY CYBRID PURSUIT.
IF YOU FAIL WE ARE ALL LOST. DO NOT FAIL.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the private log of Colonel Vanderson

I wonder if this is how Stepanovna felt in Delta, sending out a squad of questionable HERC pilots to prevent final destruction of the human race. They tell me that's what will happen if we don't knock out this weapon factory.

Total destruction.

Watching our HERCs go out past the remnants of Alpha Squadron, the word sacrifice keeps going through my

Private Log *From the private log of Colonel Vanderson, continued*

head, and I know it's probably what the pilots are thinking, too. I never expected the resistance to be so concentrated. All enemy HERCs seem to be coming from the northeast, almost as if they're trying to lure our team around the rock — separating them, or at least reducing their options.

Those pilots are going to die. The team leader understands the situation and is letting the rest of the squad engage the Cybrids while he heads around the other way to start on the base. A gun tower and one of the sacrifice humans were destroyed almost simultaneously.

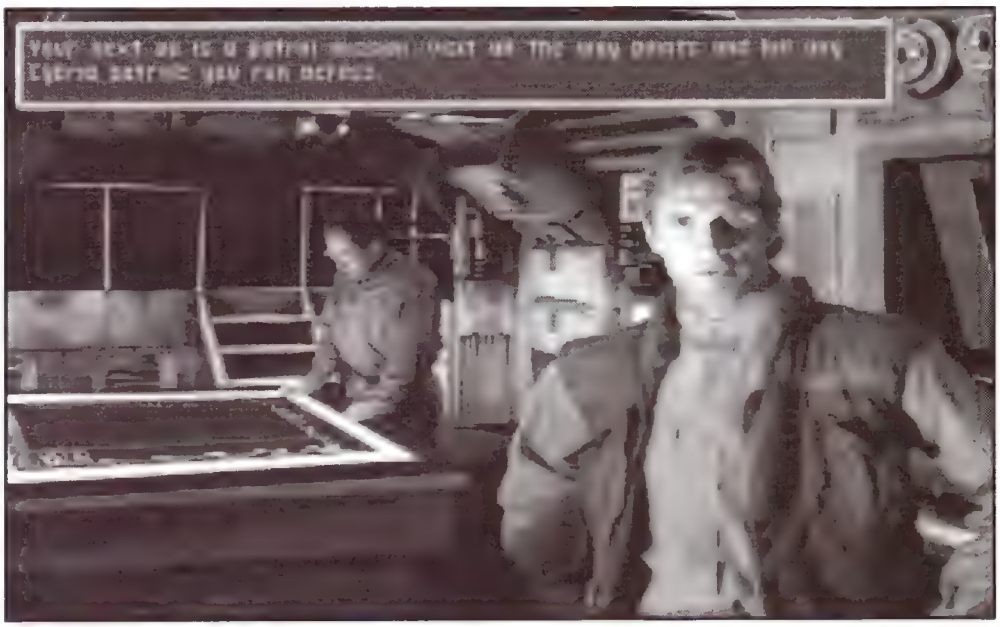
Hopefully, the team leader will have enough time and ammunition to help the survivors once the factory is down. Ironic that, to maintain hope for the rest of us, some of our best will have to abandon theirs. If there's anything to add, I'll make it official once this battle's over.

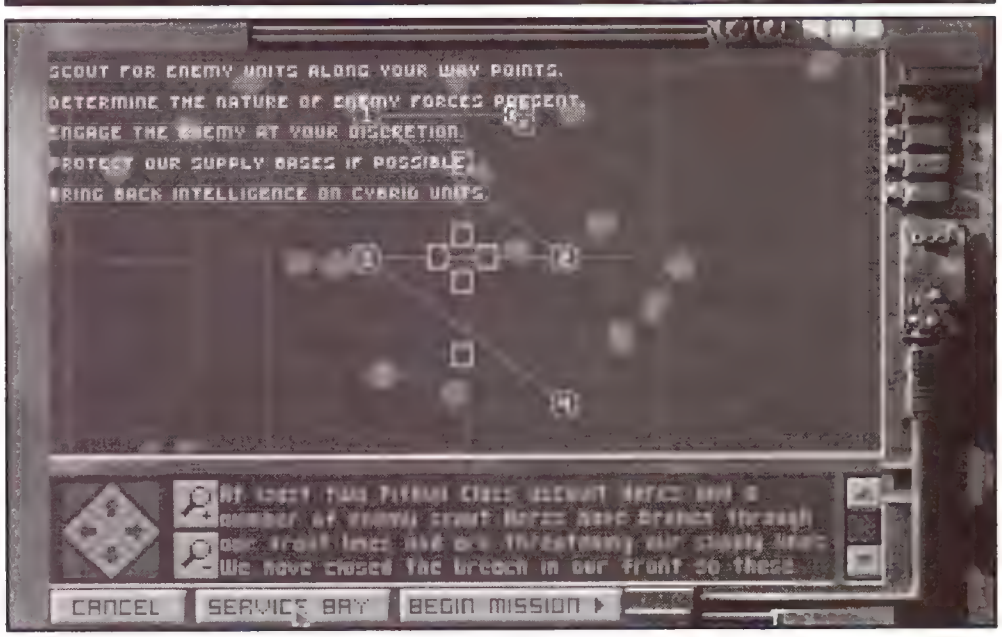
Gamma Sector: Final Campaign

Major Mission 1

Mission Type: Patrol/Strike

Above All Else: Stay alive




SCOUT FOR ENEMY UNITS ALONG YOUR WAY POINTS.
DETERMINE THE NATURE OF ENEMY FORCES PRESENT.
ENGAGE THE ENEMY AT YOUR DISCRETION.
PROTECT OUR SUPPLY BASES IF POSSIBLE.
BRING BACK INTELLIGENCE ON CYBRID UNITS.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Logged onto pilot's computer by Colonel Saunders

Identification
Colonel Saunders

Soldier, I have to be honest — I never expected you to survive this long in the war, let alone be Gierling's pet choice to spearhead this final assault. But don't think for a moment that I'm going to ride you any less.

The key thing to remember here is that you'll be facing two Pit Bulls, probably coming from different directions and appearing on your radar a few seconds apart. To keep things clear for everyone, take the largest HERC yourself. When the first Pit Bull appears, send your team after it and add your own firepower until the second appears; then concentrate your attention on that one. Unless it's got a missile rack on top, you should be able to dance around it and take it out on your own. If you're running low on high-powered weapons (especially 50mm ATCs) or are concerned about energy drainage, it might even be worthwhile to take an ECM along.

Pit Bulls are fast and have a 360-degree range of fire on their top-mounted weapons, but I'd rather spend 10 seconds going face-to-face with one of them than a Hyperion or even an Achilles any day.

Also, remember that targeting will maximize your damage potential, which is an absolute necessity against these four-legged monstrosities.

Whatever I think about you, we need your team alive and their HERCs intact for the final assault. Don't even think about acceptable losses. There are none.

If you see anyone about to die, call for help. We'll handle the Pit Bulls.

Onboard Log *Logged onto pilot's computer by Colonel Saunders, continued*

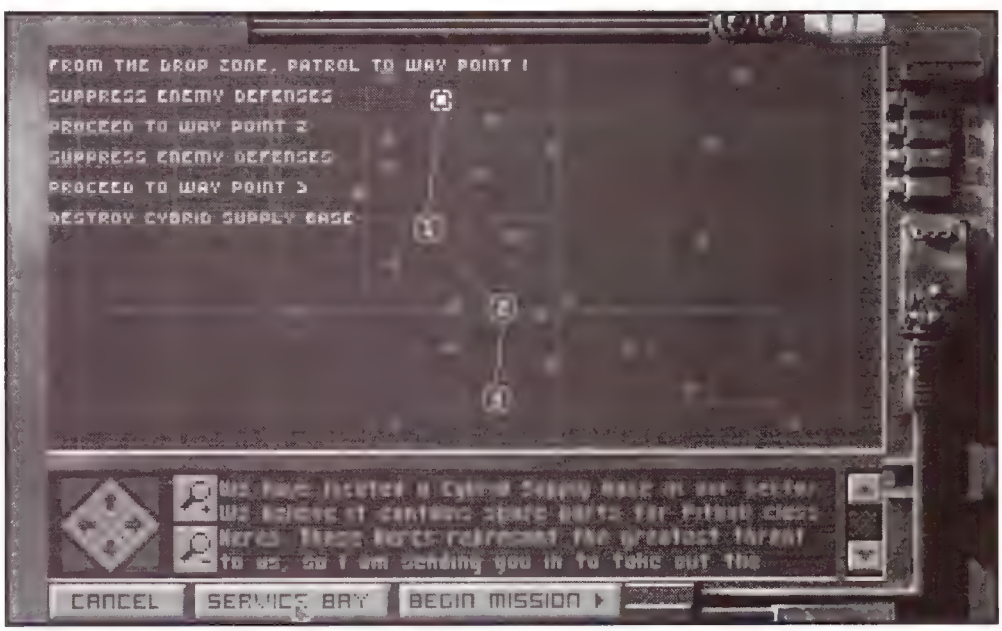
If you take out those dogs, keep in mind that the Cybrids still have smaller scout HERCs all over the place. A Mongoose might not seem like much after a Pit Bull, but if you've got an exposed generator...

Try to make it to your waypoints and stay alive.

Major Mission 2

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the Cybrid base



From the official mission log of Captain Dills

I have to admit that when somebody suggested taking a Roadrunner on this mission, I was tempted to take their advice. It stood a decent chance of simply outrunning and outmaneuvering the Pit Bulls, and I would have reached the final target with plenty of time to spare.

Luckily, I didn't take that advice after all.

The terrain is far too open for a small maneuverable HERC and the Cybrids are placed more strategically than we humans would like to think possible.

The first obstacle was a row of gun towers. I approached them slowly at one end and carefully took off their tops until the Pit Bulls made their appearance.

With only two nearby boulders and the towers for potential tactical landmarks, I charged the Pit Bull, all guns aimed at the three-barrelled EMP launcher on top. Much to my surprise, soon after I took that out, the Cybrid shut down.

During our battle, the Pit Bull had taken several shots at me, but I seemed relatively undamaged with all of my weapons intact. Luckily, before engaging the second Cybrid, I checked my status to find out my HERC was walking on legs that didn't seem much thicker than my own. I don't have the courage to see the films of my second battle.

Rather than let the Cybrid get a good angle on my legs, I simply charged full throttle and kept ramming into it — weapons firing all the time. Perhaps my targeting could

Official Transmission *From the official mission log of Captain Dills, continued*

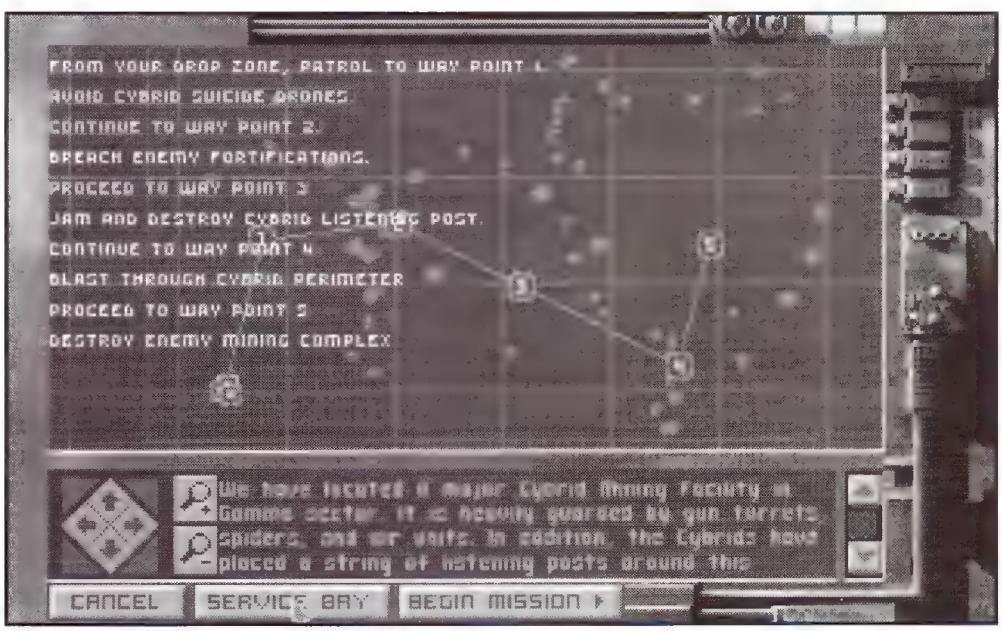
have used some finesse, but I was so close to being disabled and winding up on a tin can dissection table, I felt much more comfortable giving it a chance to blow my head off. Obviously, it didn't.

After I wasted my second dog of the day, I had barely enough firepower left to take out the Pit Bull supply bases. End of mission — and of my spotless reputation with Gut.

Major Mission 3

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the Cybrid mining base


FROM YOUR DROP ZONE, PATROL TO WAY POINT 1.
AVOID CYBRID SUICIDE DRONES.
CONTINUE TO WAY POINT 2.
BREACH ENEMY FORTIFICATIONS.
PROCEED TO WAY POINT 3
JAM AND DESTROY CYBRID LISTENING POST.
CONTINUE TO WAY POINT 4
BLAST THROUGH CYBRID PERIMETER
PROCEED TO WAY POINT 5
DESTROY ENEMY MINING COMPLEX
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Transcript of special meeting called by Colonel Saunders

"I trust you've all seen the files on our recent suicide thrust against the Cybrids. The young hotshots who traded armor for speed found themselves bleeding to death as fast as any Cybrid could hope for.

"So we don't make this same mistake again. I'm insisting that you take the biggest HERCs we have. Any of you who've danced around listening posts before know the drill — you can't leave the path so you might as well take a nice slow HERC with as many guns as you can stack on it.

"You'll need to move along in case the Cybrids send reinforcements, but approach terrain landmarks as carefully as possible.

"The last team was ambushed by a group of Hyperions while trying to blast the ATC towers at such close range that our team's shields were down and vulnerable to the Cybrid attack. Even if, by some miracle, they survived, they certainly wouldn't have made it past the second Hyperion patrol, which we feel is currently near the base.

Believe it or not, I don't like playing "should have" games with dead pilots. Fight smart and spare us any more of these little rituals.

Major Mission 4

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Take out the Cybrid airbase

SUPPRESS ENEMY DEFENSES EN ROUTE TO THE AIR BASE
DESTROY THE CYBRID INSTALLATION AND CLEAR THE AREA
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

From the personal files of Corporal Chon

Dear Olivia:

I'm glad to hear you are all safe. I know there's nothing glamorous about saying "Daddy worked in the commissary serving rancid home-brew during the war," but it doesn't mean I'm not contributing. Today, Lt. Leiter came in looking miserable. She asked for a drink and I asked if she was still active, since alcohol is not served to active pilots (personally, I'd trade all the booze here for just one pilot's meal).

She was about to say she was grounded, but I cut her off and asked for the story. Apparently, she'd just taken out a major Cybrid

From the personal files of Corporal Chon, continued

airbase, but not without having the legs of her Colossus shot from underneath. The base was pretty far away, so not knowing what the opposition would be like, they played it safe and stayed away from the missiles — generally the best weapon against Buzzards.

With the Colossus taking point, Leiter was able to take out the Hyperion and the other Cybrid HERCs along the way without trouble. The real problem came with the Buzzards. Time and ammunition required her to let them be and Lt. Leiter told her squad member, Lt. John Dills, to play clean-up, firing at will at whatever she shot. Unfortunately that made it best for the Cybrids to fly between our two HERCs, where Leiter couldn't hit them without giving the Cybrids even more time to send reinforcements to the base.

Her armaments were in fine shape — I think she took out seven buildings — but she was traveling at a fraction of normal speed. With little energy and even fewer ATC rounds, she did as much damage as possible before crashing helplessly to the ground.

"I told him to fight," she said, eyeing the bottles behind me, "but I never called for help. He saw the buildings vanish off our radar link and thought I was fine."

Then I got the details of the debriefing, which, as old as you've gotten, is still not fit for your eyes. Finally, I just looked at her and said, "Look, if Saunders really thought he could do a better job, he'd be out there."

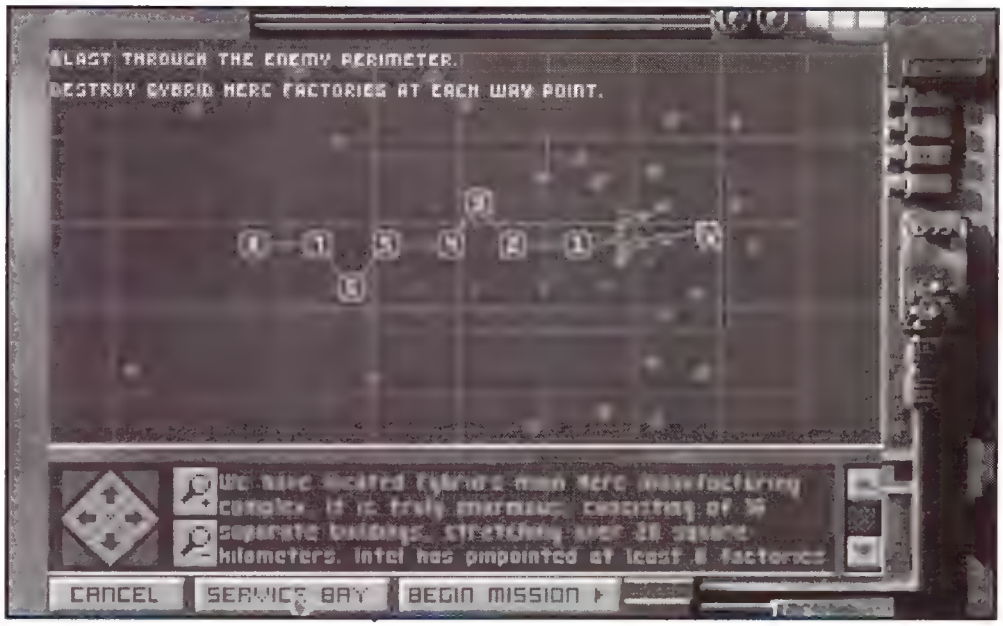
After she considered my embarrassingly simple comfort, she smiled and left, drink unordered. I may not be a pilot, but I sleep well knowing I've done my part.

Love, Daddy

Major Mission 5

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy as many Cybrid installations as possible.



Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Saunders

OK, see all of those numbers? That's how we're going to do this — by the numbers. We frankly don't expect to take out all of the bases, but you'd better knock out a few before you come home crying for your long-lost mamas. A few things to remember:

1. On the way to the first factory, you'll encounter a line of gun towers. Forget about attacking them because you'll

Logged into pilot's computer by Colonel Saunders, continued

need every ATC round and gigawatt of energy when things really get ugly.

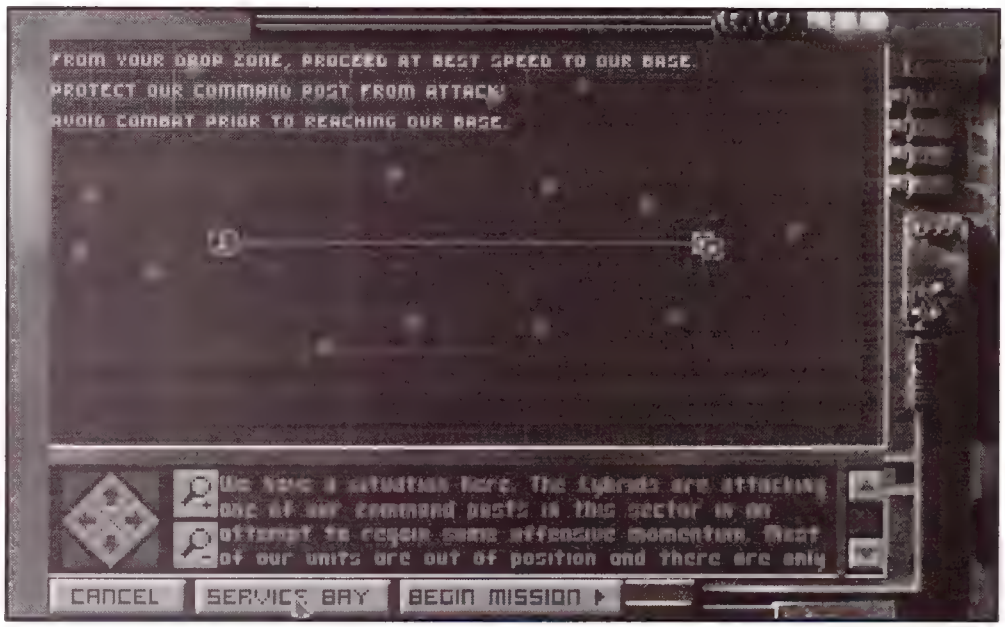
2. Expect to repeatedly run into light resistance. We're talking Arachnitrons and Stingrays. Left unchecked, they'll take out your legs and cockpits, respectively. Their main purpose is to force you to look down to fight them — thus making it easier for you to ignore the Pit Bulls that are probably bearing down on your butt. The key is to back up as soon as your radar picks up ground units. If they're not Pit Bulls, engage when it's safe. Make the Cybrids come to you. Then you take out the factories.

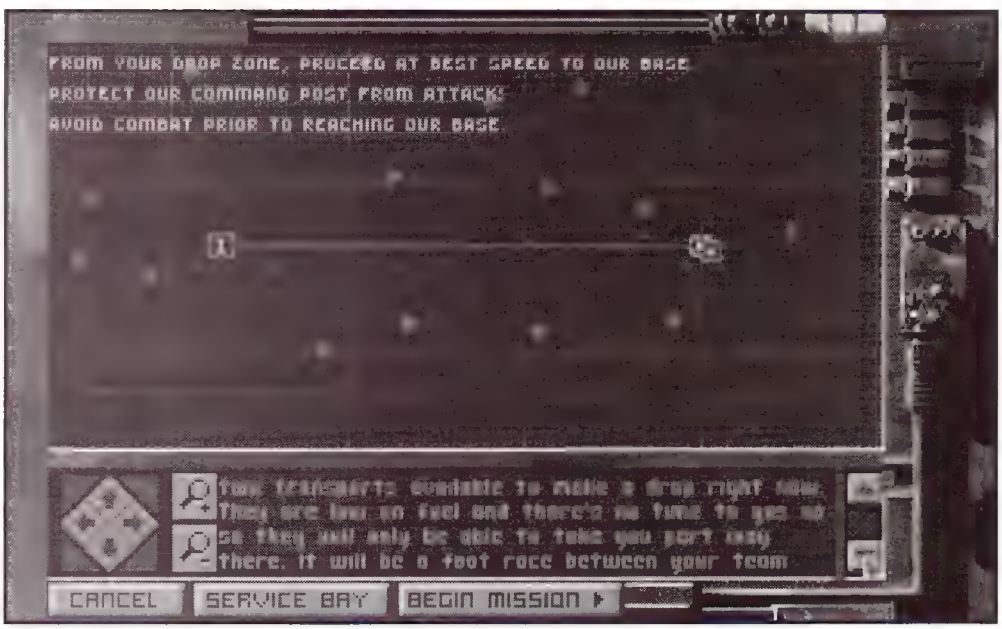
3. Buzzards, combined with the Arachnitrons, are in excellent position to take out your legs no matter how big you may be. In the great spaces between waypoints, take them out and then wait for your energy weapons to recharge.

Major Mission 6

Mission Type: Scramble

Above All Else: Protect the other base


FROM YOUR DROP ZONE, PROCEED AT BEST SPEED TO OUR BASE.
PROTECT OUR COMMAND POST FROM ATTACK!
AVOID COMBAT PRIOR TO REACHING OUR BASE.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION


FROM YOUR DROP ZONE, PROCEED AT BEST SPEED TO OUR BASE.
PROTECT OUR COMMAND POST FROM ATTACK!
AVOID COMBAT PRIOR TO REACHING OUR BASE.
CANCEL
SERVICE BAY
BEGIN MISSION

Classified communique from General Gierling

TO: *Gamma Quadrant personnel*
FM: *General Gierling*
RE: *Recent Cybrid assault and AI analysis*

In case any of you didn't notice from the last tapes, our artificial intelligence analysts have a few observations gleaned from the Cybrids' latest assault.

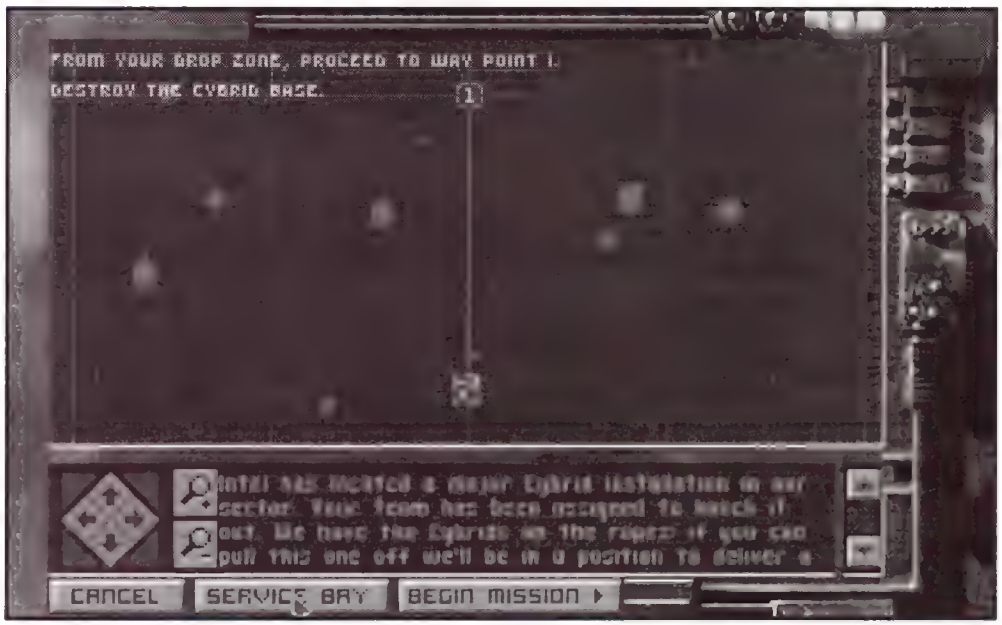
The first concerns the fleeing Achilles units. Working on orders and what would normally be a foolish hunch, our attack squad put all energy to the forward shields and just kept running. The Achilles units took a few shots, but never stopped moving forward. The Cybrids didn't even turn around and take advantage of our backsides.

At the base, the Cybrids attacked in three pairs of Hyperions, with air coverage increasing moments before their arrival. Such symmetry is new among the Cybrids. It's possible that Cybrid command AI has broken down, there's been a serious change in Cybrid supplies, or they've learned something we haven't. Keep your heads up, and let's end this quickly.

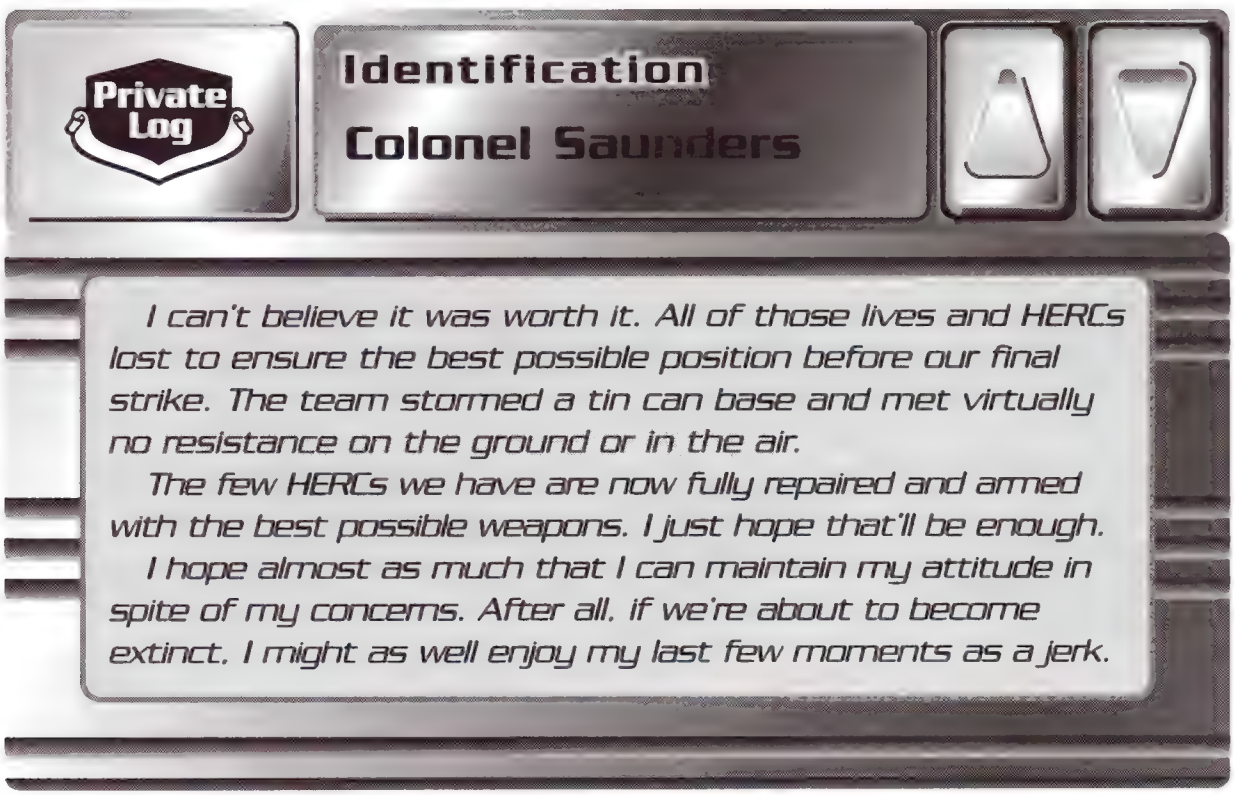
Major Mission 7

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the Cybrid installations



From the private log of Colonel Saunders



I can't believe it was worth it. All of those lives and HERCs lost to ensure the best possible position before our final strike. The team stormed a tin can base and met virtually no resistance on the ground or in the air.

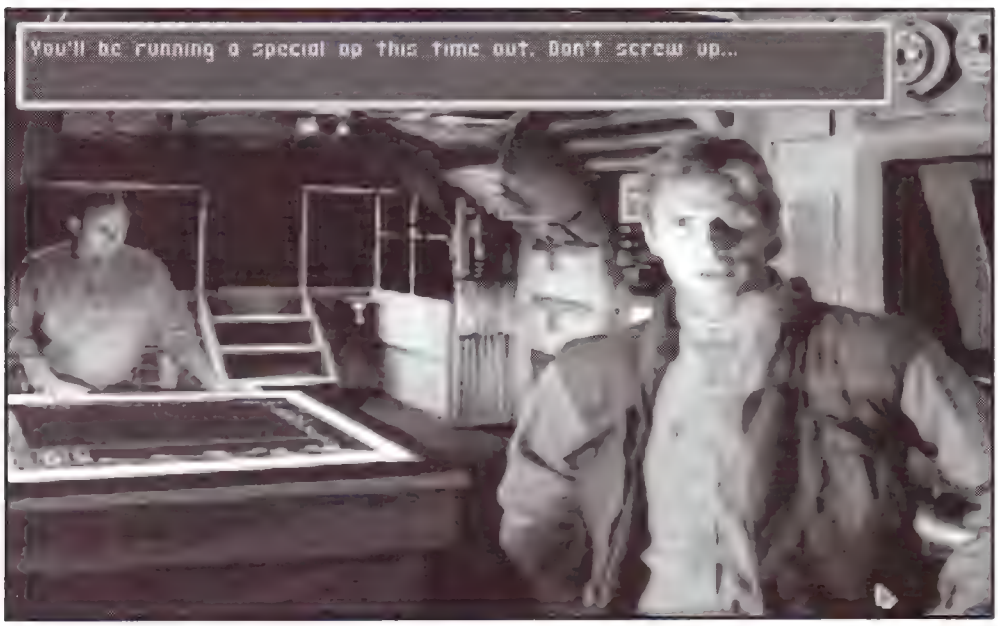
The few HERCs we have are now fully repaired and armed with the best possible weapons. I just hope that'll be enough.

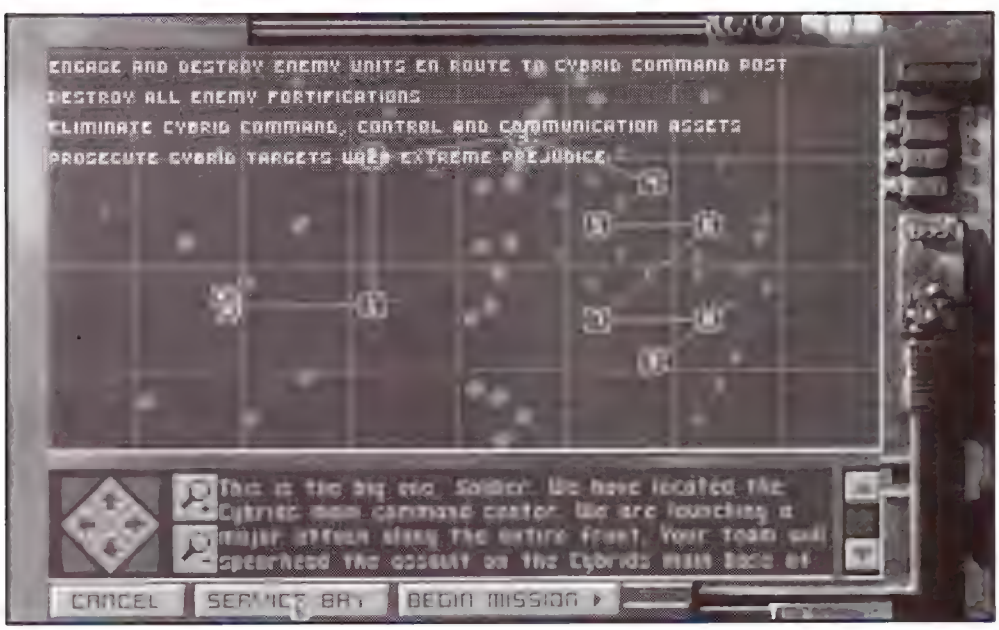
I hope almost as much that I can maintain my attitude in spite of my concerns. After all, if we're about to become extinct, I might as well enjoy my last few moments as a jerk.

Major Mission 8

Mission Type: Strike

Above All Else: Destroy the Cybrid installations




ENGAGE AND DESTROY ENEMY UNITS EN ROUTE TO CYBRID COMMAND POST
DESTROY ALL ENEMY FORTIFICATIONS
ELIMINATE CYBRID COMMAND, CONTROL AND COMMUNICATION ASSETS
PROSECUTE CYBRID TARGETS WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE
CANCEL
BEGIN MISSION

News Net — March 11 — cleared for release 12:00

Tin Cans Defeated on Earth

General Gierling of HDF announced this morning at 08:00 that a team of three HERCs — two Colossus types and one Raptor, almost the last of the human defense forces in the sector — destroyed the Cybrid control center, effectively ending their 20-year domination of earth.

"I must truly commend Captain Lawrence Dawson for his ingenuity in executing the raid," Gierling explained. "His reading of the situation actually exceeded that of our High Command."

With Capt. Dawson and Lt. Giselle Leiter riding in the Colossus HERCs, while Lt. Harvey Kyle acted as scout in the Raptor (see "Kyle — Profile of a Survivor"), they initially turned south, completely bypassing their first waypoint.

"I smelled Hyperions," Dawson explained in his official debriefing. "Besides, the whole point of running silently is to avoid any contact before reaching the base."

Keeping scanners on passive at all times, they managed to destroy all of the critical buildings while having to fight only two Pit Bulls in the process.

"We've got a long way to go toward completely ridding ourselves of the Cybrids on the colonies," Gierling explained, "but for the first time in years, it is once again safe to live on the homeworld."

News Net *Victory Transmission, continued*

War Hero Maimed in Freak Accident

Versailles, France

Less than 72 hours after leading the mission that effectively drove the Cybrids from Earth, Capt. Lawrence Dawson of HDF is in critical condition following an explosion at the famed French palace.

Numerous sources say that Capt. Dawson was exploring the legendary ruins, contemplating a post-war career in renovation. The furnace, which had not been used in over 30 years, seemed to be in working order at first but then exploded while Dawson was exploring the wine cellar. The fire and additional explosions from what was the finest remaining collection of champagne in the world caused second-degree burns and deep lacerations over 85% of his body. Shattered glass has left the captain blind, but recent advances in the development of artificial eyes may help doctors restore Dawson's sight.

"He's in good spirits," General Gierling said at the hospital press conference, "and asked me to tell you he would not be entering the EarthSiege pilots' beauty contest." General Gierling went on to say that the hero has canceled his retirement plans and now is considering a post somewhere in HDF Command, most likely under an assumed name.

Appendix A

The Reality of EarthSiege — a Tribute to the Mechanics That Made My Job Hellish

Most of the time, putting together an authorized game strategy — be it for a magazine article, a chapter in a book, or a whopping guide such as the one you're holding, consists of four steps: extracting raw data from original design documents and scripts, bleeding the designers for every trick they put into the game and their personal strategies, playing the game enough to ruin any hope of a normal life, and presenting all of this information in a clear and engaging manner.

Raw data is often deliciously simple. Something does X points of damage to something else which can withstand Y points of damage before something bad happens. Any maroon with a calculator can improve their play exponentially by acting on the knowledge that, for example, X missiles could take out a lower leg on a given HERC. I envisioned crafting careful strategies from this arcane data and creating tables as useful and precise as those found in any RPG or unit-based strategy game.

While trying not to laugh himself into a coma, Dave Selle sent me the raw data on HERC armor — over 30 pages of it, with up to five pages of

listings per HERC. I was thinking in terms of legs, arms, torso, and head. Not a chance. Shins, quads, feet, hardpoints, brackets, cockpits — front and rear— all have different armor values. Inside, of course, there is an additional list of targets: actuators, gyroscopes, life support, sensors, hydraulics, and a zillion other intricate details you never think about until your screen is blinking and things aren't quite functioning properly.

Undaunted (rather stupidly, I admit), I claimed full comprehension of the armor data and asked for the weapons' numbers. Unfortunately, they didn't really exist except as equations — especially for the energy weapons. How high is the setpoint? What is the atmosphere like? What's the range? How strong are the targets' shields? (That's assuming you hit only the front or the rear shield. Hit a HERC from the side, a whole new set of random and set factors comes into play.)

Data from individual ATC rounds won't tell anyone anything given the movement that goes on between every round. After all, if both HERCs are standing completely still neither deserves to be in EarthSiege.

My last hope for useful raw data was with missiles.

I've learned to stop hoping. Apparently, if there is even a fragment of shield facing the missile, the detonation will occur before contact with the actual armored shell. Even without the shields interfering, explosions are messy, random things. A whole new set of percentages comes into play to determine which internal systems might be damaged by the explosion.

It was soon after I gave up on the idea of my helpful charts that Dave Selle told me the beta versions I'd devoted months to mastering were all set on "brutal."

Appendix B

Interview with Dave Selle

Dave Selle, along with producer Mark (Space Quest) Crowe, codesigned EarthSiege. In addition to all of his design chores, he also served as mission scripter and coordinator of the mission disks, and as working codesigner of EarthSiege's modem-ready sister game, Battledrome.

In spite of a strong desire to change his phone number (Dave, after this is done, I promise to try to forget it), he was also my principal contact and helper with the book, providing loads of previously unknown information, such as HERCs being more lightly armored on the backside, and the design team naming the annoying colonel "Saunders." (You didn't think I was responsible for that, did you?)

Once I promised that this would be one of my last requests, Dave gave me some more time to ask the following questions:

Q: What are your favorite games when you're not playing EarthSiege?

A: X-Com, Civilization, MechWarrior, and multiplayer Battletech on Genie.

Q: What was the first game that really turned you on to this whole business?
A: Ultima III on Apple, one of the first I really got into.

Q: What's your personal robot history playing and designing. Do you read the novels, watch the anime, go for the paper-and-dice scene?
A: I worked part-time for Dynamix while I was in college. MechWarrior was under development at that point. I've also played the Battletech board games and read a few books. I haven't really checked out what's been going on with that for the last six months or so.

Q: What's your favorite HERC and configuration?
A: Definitely the Samson with five 50mm ATCs and maybe some PBWs or ELFs on top.

Q: Your favorite CO?
A: Saunders.

Q: Complete this sentence: If I was General Gierling, the first thing I'd do is —
A: Get a haircut.

Q: If I was Gut, the first thing I would do is —
A: Go to a gym and get a clue.

Q: How did you and Mark Crowe divide responsibilities?
A: Mark developed the original product proposal and was also producer, so he did much of the required business organizing as well as his day-to-day design work. Mark knew how he wanted the art to look and feel, for example, the fading palettes and hazing. I worked on the missions as well as designing the general operations — where things are on the screen and how they worked. I also scripted most of the missions.

Q: What controls do you use (keyboard, Thrustmaster, etc.) when piloting?
A: Thrustmaster F-16 FCS, rudder pedals, and the WCS Mark II.

Q: Complete this sentence: The most important thing to remember when piloting a HERC is —
A: Keep moving. Don't stand still or you'll be dead.

Q: The most important thing to remember in the repair/build screens is —
A: If you have the salvage, build a HERC every chance you get.

Q: If you were heading into battle, what would you have playing on your HERC's CD player?
A: "Welcome to the Jungle" by Guns & Roses or Pink Floyd's "One of These Days (I will cut you up into tiny pieces)."

Q: If you were sure that your entire target audience had Pentiums, 16 megs of RAM, 3X CD-ROM drives, and other supercool hardware, what would you add to the game?

A: New scenarios, including battles on the moon with varying gravity. We'd also texture-map everything and include much more complicated rolling terrain. Pentium 90s worked up hills, down ravines and valleys, but we tested slow on P60s. Eventually, there will be more objects to walk over. We're going to try to include some of that in EarthSiege II, which we're planning to release at the end of 1995.

Q: Any EarthSiege-related nightmares you care to relate?

A: Talent coordination in Hollywood seemed like one. We had to cut a bunch of scenes. But no actual dreams about HERCs chasing me.

Q: The scene: triumphant pilot finishes off the Cybrid control center at the end of the last campaign. The war is over, reporters flood the base and stick a microphone and camera in the hero's face. "You've destroyed the Cybrid hold on Earth and have allowed humanity to begin rebuilding the homeworld. What are you going to do now?" What does our hero say?

A: I'm going to Disneyland — whatever's left at that point.

Appendix C

EarthSiege Coming Attractions

What does the future hold? Next up for fans of EarthSiege is a set of new missions called the EarthSiege Expansion Pack. The EarthSiege was a series of skirmishes. While the humans were fighting to reclaim their homeworld, the Cybrids were building a fleet in space — one larger than anyone's calculations could have predicted.

How they've managed to build such a fleet is a question as confusing as why they sent the fleet to Earth — especially since, given Earth's resources, it would be a one-way trip, even if they defeated the humans. There is too much that is unknown.

What we do know is that General Gierling is back, commanding the human resistance as the first Cybrids touch down — days before the new Apocalypse-class HERC is ready. This nine-hard-point machine is faster than a Rhino but as heavily armored as a Colossus.

Additionally, the humans will have four new weapons:

EMP2: A double-barreled version of the original, compactly fitting on one hard point.

PBW2: More powerful and longer range.

ELF2: More range than the original with greater power and no firing delay.

Plasma Launcher: The only weapon the Cybrids don't have. Plasma launchers are constructed in the build screen.

The Cybrids return as well, with two new nine-hard-point HERCs: the Diablo and the Headhunter. No additional details on these HERCs are currently available.

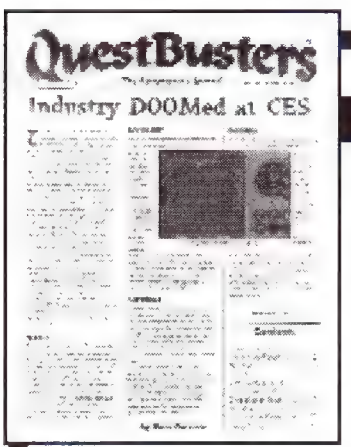
Finally, the battle will occur on two new terrains: Urban Ruins and Wasteland.

FREE SOLUTIONS!

Just circle any solution on the list below and return this coupon.

Or choose TWO solutions if you join the QuestBusters Guild™ at the same time — and you'll also get a dozen more solutions in *QuestBusters:™ the Adventurers Journal.*

Each monthly issue includes a complete solution to a new quest, pages of clues to others, and in-depth reviews of all the latest adventures. Membership is usually $19 a year, but with this coupon you can join for only $16.95*


QuestBusters
Industry DOOMed at CES

Circle one (TWO if you join the QuestBusters Guild™)

ALONE IN THE DARK 3
DARK SUN 2
DEATH GATE
THE LEGEND OF KYRANDIA 3
MISSION CRITICAL
REALMS OF ARKANIA: STAR TRAIL
STONEKEEP

☐ Please send my FREE SOLUTION.
☐ Make that TWO FREE SOLUTIONS: I have enclosed $16.95 to join the QuestBusters Guild™ and get the next 12 issues of QuestBusters™.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Visa/Mastercard # _____

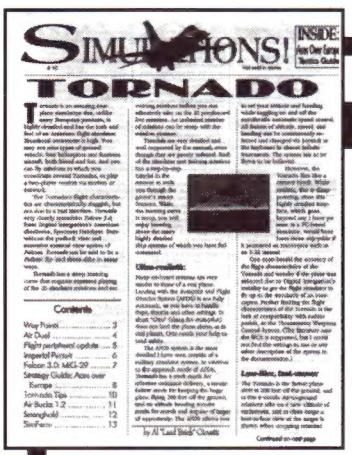
Expiration _____ Daytime Phone _____

*($23.95 to Canada, $29.95 overseas, both in U.S. Funds. Current members: you may use this coupon to renew a standard $19 membership. KQ) at the $16.95 rate and also receive two free solutions. Adventure Express members, please enclose $22.95 to renew.)

Send this coupon (not a copy) to: QuestBusters™·POB 85143·Tucson AZ 85754

FREE STRATEGY GUIDES!

Just circle either strategy guide below and return this coupon.
Or get BOTH guides if you subscribe to *SIMULATIONS!*™ at the same time — and you'll get six more collections of strategies, tactics and hints!™.
Each bi-monthly issue includes a strategy guide to a new simulation or strategy game, hints for others, and in-depth reviews of the latest games.
Membership costs $16 a year, but with this coupon you can sign up for only $13.95*


SIMULATIONS!
TORNADO
Contents

Circle one (BOTH if you subscribe to *SIMULATIONS!*™)

THE ACE'S GUIDE TO WWII AIR COMBAT TACTICS

THE ACE'S GUIDE TO RED BARON

☐ Please send my FREE Ace's Guide™ Book
☐ Make that TWO FREE strategy guides: I have enclosed $13.95 to subscribe to *SIMULATIONS!*™ and get the next 6 issues delivered straight to me.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Visa/Mastercard # _____
Expiration _____ Daytime Phone _____

*($17.95 to Canada, $19.95 overseas, both in U.S. Funds. Current members: you may use this coupon to renew at these reduced rates.) at the $14.95 rate and also receive two free guides. Adventure Express members, please enclose $22.95 to renew.)

Send this coupon (not a copy) to: SIMULATIONS!™•POB 85143•Tucson AZ 85754

The Earth Has Been Reduced to a Nuclear Wasteland Controlled by Cybernetic-Hybrid Machines. Their Only Mission: Eliminate You!

YOU'RE IN BIG TROUBLE! One Cybrid HERC moves in from the south, the other comes in from the east. The supply depot you've been assigned to search out and destroy lies due west. You're low on weapons, your fuel is running out, the radar's not working properly, and you're all alone.

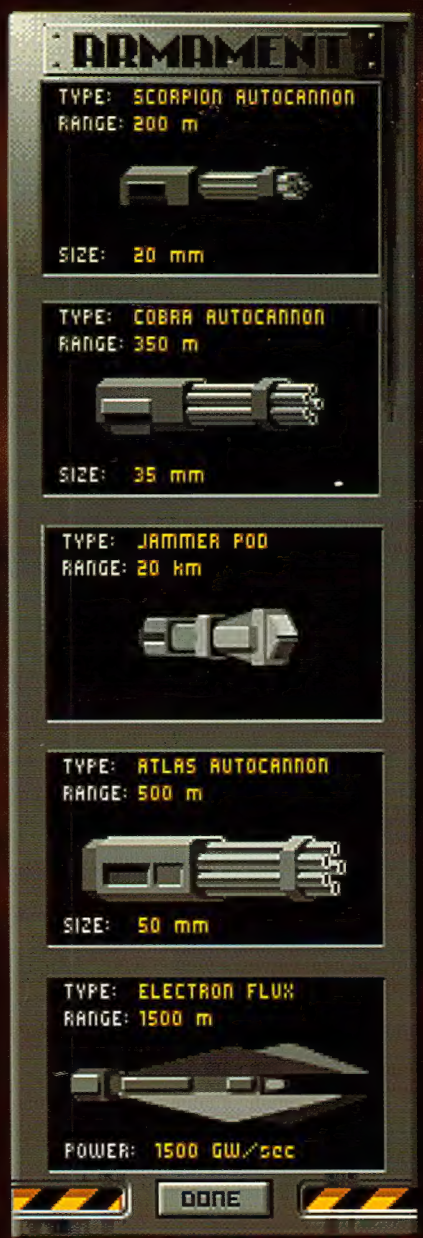
Learn battle strategies to help you defeat the Cybrids.

Grab the EarthSiege Official Players Guide and get back into the game! Included in this exclusive guide are all the tips and hints to master the latest Metaltech adventure, including:

- Complete weapons and defensive equipment breakdowns
- In-depth mission walk-throughs
- Strategies for piloting your HERC
- Analyses of your Cybrid enemies
- The Ten Commandments of HERC fighting!

Master tactical strategies designed to help you win.

Find out what it takes to succeed at career missions.



Find out which weapons are best for your HERC!

$18.95 USA $26.95 CANADA

1-57280-009-7

51895

9 781572 800090

INFOTAINMENT WORLD BOOKS

SIERRA